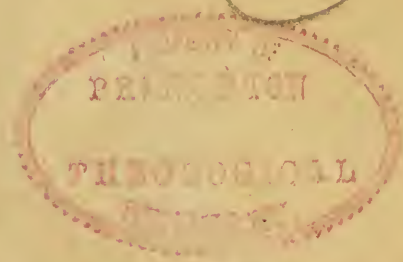




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S E R M O N S

O N T H E

Following S U B J E C T S,

V I Z.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| • Against too great Anxiety in worldly Matters. | Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud. |
| • Of Forgiveness of Injuries. | Of the Heinousness of the Sin of wilful Murder. |
| Of the Nature and End of the <i>Sabbath</i> . | Of the several Sorts of Hypocrisy. |
| The Parable of the Sower explained. | Who are the true Church of God. |
| The End and Design of the <i>Jewish</i> Law. | Rebellion against God as malignant as Witchcraft. |
| The Practice of Virtue the greatest Security against our Enemies. | All Sin proceeds from some Misperception of GOD. |
| Of the Nature and Extent of false Witness. | Of Religious Melancholy. |
| | Of publicly Denouncing Curses upon Sinners. |

By *SAMUEL CLARKE*, D.D.
late Rector of St *James's*, *Westminster*.

The Tenth and Last VOLUME.

Published from the A U T H O R ' s *Manuscript.*

To which is added,

*A Compleat INDEX of the Texts of Scripture Preached upon ;
a Second of the Texts occasionally explained ; and a Third of the
Principal Matters contained in This and the foregoing Volumes.*

By *JOHN CLARKE*, D.D. Dean of *Sarum*.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *W. Botham*, for JAMES and JOHN KNAPTON,
at the Crown in St *Paul's* Church-Yard. MDCCXXXI.



CONTENTS.

SERM. I. Against too great Anxiety
in wordly Matters.

MATT. vi. 31, 32.

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Page 1

SERM. II. Of Forgiveness of Injuries.

EPHES. iv. 32. latter part.

Forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. 23

C O N T E N T S.

SERM. III. Of the Nature and End of the Sabbath.

MAR. ii. 27.

*And he said unto them, The Sabbath was
made for Man, and not Man for the
Sabbath.* 45

SERM. IV. The Parable of the Sower explained.

St LUKE viii. 15.

*But that on the good ground, are they,
which in an honest and good heart, ha-
ving heard the Word, keep it, and bring
forth fruit with Patience.* 67

SERM. V. The End and Design of the Jewish Law.

GAL. ii. 15, 16.

*We who are Jews by nature, and not sin-
ners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a
man is not justified by the works of the
law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,
even we have believed in Jesus Christ,
that we might be justified by the faith of
Christ,*

C O N T E N T S.

*Christ, and not by the works of the law :
for by the works of the law shall no flesh
be justified.* 95

SERM. VI. The Practice of Virtue the
greatest Security against our Ene-
mies.

I P E T E R iii. 13.

*And who is he that will harm you, if you
be followers of that which is good?*
129

SERM. VII. Of the Nature and Extent
of false Witness.

P R O V. xxiv. 28, 29.

*Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour
without Cause, and deceive not with thy
Lips : Say not, I will do to Him, as
He hath done to Me ; I will render to
the man according to his Works.* 151

SERM. VIII. Of the Sin of delibe-
rate Fraud.

A C T S v. 3, 4.

*But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan
filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost,
and*

C O N T E N T S.

and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this Thing in thine Heart? Thou hast not lied unto Men, but unto God.

173

SERM. IX. Of the Heinousness of the Sin of Wilful Murder.

EXOD. xxi. 14.

But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

199

SERM. X. Of the several Sorts of Hypocrisy.

JOB xiii. 16.

He also shall be my Salvation, for an Hypocrite shall not come before him.

219

SERM. XI. Who are the true Church of GOD.

GAL. iv. 22, 23, 24.

For it is written, that Abraham had Two Sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by

by

C O N T E N T S.

by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the Flesh; but he of the free-woman, was by Promise. Which things are an Allegory: For These are the two Covenants. 243

S E R M. XII. Rebellion against God as malignant as Witchcraft.

I S A M. xv. 23.

For Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry :-----. 265

S E R M. XIII. All Sin proceeds from some Misapprehension of G O D.

J E R. v. 4.

Therefore I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the Judgment of their God. 291

S E R M. XIV. Of Religious Melancholy.

J O B vi. 4.

For the Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit :

C O N T E N T S.

*Spirit ; The Terrours of God, do set
themselves in array against me.* 311

S E R M. XV. Of publickly Denouncing
Curfes upon Sinners.

‘ D E U T. xxvii. 26.

*Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the
words of this Law to do them ; And all
the people shall say, Amen.* 337

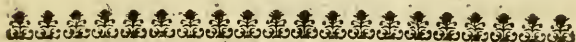


S E R M O N



S E R M O N I.

Against too great Anxiety in
Worldly Matters.



MAT T. VI. 31, 32.

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.



THE Duty of Contentment and S E R M.
Resignation to the Will of God, I.
is a Duty whose obligation is
evident even from the Law of
Nature. For since we at first received
VOL. X, B our

S E R M. our very Being from God, and owe our
 I. Preservation to him every moment, and
 every thing we enjoy is his free Gift; 'tis
 plain, that All Thanks are due to him
 for whatever good we *receive*; and no
 man has any just reason to repine against
 Providence, for the *want* of such good
 things as he has no right to demand. As
 to the *Calamities* and *Troubles* incident to
 humane Life; with regard to *These* also,
Sinful Creatures have no just cause of
 murmuring: For *wherefore doth a living*
man complain, a man for the Punishment
of his Sins? Lam. iii. 39. Under the Re-
 velation of the *Gospel*, the Grounds and
 Motives of Contentment are become yet
much stronger, since the Concerns of this
 present World, short and uncertain and
 transitory in Themselves, appear still *more*
 transitory, when compared with that *Life*
and Immortality which is now brought to
Light; and the *Afflictions* of this *present*
 time, are not worthy to be compared with
 the *Glory* that shall be revealed hereafter.
 Proportionable to the real Value of Things,
 ought to be mens Care and Concern about
 them: And therefore with the *greatest*
reason,

reason, our Saviour, in exhorting his Disciples to take care of their *eternal* Interest, bids them, *comparatively* speaking, to take No thought what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed; For after all these things (says he) do the Gentiles seek; For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Literally understood, the Precept, to the greatest part of Christians, is manifestly impracticable: For the *Necessaries of Life* must needs be taken care for; and without the Support of the *present* life, there can be no room for the practice of those Virtues, by which we are to be prepared for that which is *to come*. There must therefore be some *Distinctions* made, in our understanding This and the like Precepts: For want of attending to which, Many may be apt to say, *This is a hard saying, and who can bear it?* And yet in reality, the distinctions upon which the right understanding of this Precept depends, are as plain and obvious, in the nature of the Thing, and in the construction and connexion of the Words themselves, as other the most

S E R M. usual figures and comparative ways of expression in common Speech, which no man ever mistakes. To set this matter therefore in a clear and distinct Light, I observe

I. *First*; T H A T there was a particular *time*, and there were particular *persons*, when and to whom, and when and to whom *only*, this Precept was given in its *literal* and *strict* sense. Our Saviour sent forth his Apostles to preach the Gospel *from City to City*, in such a manner as was altogether inconsistent with their attending to *Any* worldly affairs. Accordingly he invested them with miraculous Powers, and promised to afford them a miraculous Support. And suitable to the Circumstances of such a Mission, were the Precepts he gave them to observe therein.

Luk. xii. *Sell that ye have, and give alms. Freely ye*
 33. *have received, freely give. Provide neither*
 Matt. x. 8. *gold nor silver nor brass in your purses: Nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat. At another time, and in other circumstances, his directions to them were very different:*

Luk. xxii. 36; Now *he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.* In like manner the words of the *Text*, considered as spoken to the *Apostles*, during their preaching from one City to another, may well be understood literally: *Take no thought, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed.* Ver. 34; *Take no thought, no, not so much as for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.*

S E R M.
I.

BUT when the words are considered as a general direction, to *all* Christians, at *all* times, and in *all* circumstances; then 'tis manifest they must be understood to be a caution against *such* Worldly Cares, as are inconsistent with *Our* Duty; in like manner as to the *Apostles*, they were at that particular Time a prohibition of *All* Worldly Cares, as being inconsistent with *Their* Duty. The Professors of Christ's religion, must at *no* time, and in *no* circumstances, be *so* sollicitous; they must in *no* case be *so* anxious, about the affairs of the *present* Life, as to neglect the

S E R M. greater and more important Concerns of
 I. That which is *to come*. And *This* sense
 of the words is justified by the *Argument*
 our Saviour makes use of in the Context,
 ver. 24; *No man can serve two masters ;*
for either he will hate the one, and love
the other ; or else he will hold to the one,
and despise the other : Ye cannot serve God
and Mammon : Therefore I say unto you,
Take no thought for your life, what ye
shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet
for your body, what ye shall put on : That
is, do not so take thought about these
things, as to become Servants of Mam-
mon, and forget your Duty towards your
heavenly Master. St John in his first
Epistle, ch. ii. 15, gives a like Exhorta-
tion ; Love not the world, neither the things
that are in the world ; If any man love
the world, the love of the Father is not
in him. And the words of our Sa-
viour, ver. 34 of This chapter ; Take no
thought for the morrow ; as they might
well be applied to the Apostles in the li-
teral sense, during the time of their Mis-
sion ; so with regard to Christians in all
Ages, (the word, morrow, signifying figu-
2
ratively

ratively the indefinite uncertain future S E R M.
time of man's life,) they may very reason- I.
ably, (according to the forementioned Ar-
gument drawn by our Lord from the im-
possibility of serving both God and Mam-
mon,) they may very reasonably be under-
stood *only* as a Prohibition of *That Care*
of the World, which he himself elsewhere
describes, (*Matt. xiii. 22.*) as *choaking the*
word, so that it *becometh unfruitful*: It
being indeed very natural for worldly
and ambitious minds, continually to en-
large their Prospect of *the morrow*, and
to extend their Hopes and Designs from
one uncertain indeterminate time to an-
other; 'till Death unexpected blasts all
their Thoughts at once, and surprizes
them unfruitful of any Works of Righ-
teousness. Which Folly is very affectio-
nately reproved by our Saviour in the
Parable of the Rich man, who was blef-
sing himself in the vain Thoughts of his
Stores laid up for many years, that very
night when his Soul was required of
him.

II. Secondly, I O B S E R V E that the words
of the Text, when considered as a gene-

S E R M. *ral* Command to *all* Christians, are very
 I. reasonably to be understood in this greater
 ~~~~~ *latitude* of signification; because, if we  
 attend to the connexion of the whole sentence in this and the following verses, we shall find the expression to be, not *absolute*, but *comparative*. *Take no Thought* (says our Lord) *what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; -----but seek ye first, or principally, (in St Luke 'tis, seek ye rather) the Kingdom of God.* Now, according to the Analogy of the *Jewish* language, *Two* Sentences connected in this manner by way of opposition, are in sense the same *only*, as if it had been said in *One*; *Be more careful to attain the Kingdom of God, than the Conveniencies of this present Life.*

T H E R E are in Scripture *Many* very remarkable Expressions of this kind.

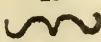
I N the *Old Testament*, Mal. i. 2, 3. *Jacob have I loved, says God, and Esau have I hated.* The Propositions are not to be understood asunder, but to be taken together as *One*; *Jacob have I loved, more than Esau.* For God did not intend to express *Hatred* towards *Esau*; but only

to love *Jacob* comparatively with a *greater Love*. Again, *Jer. vii. 22* ; *I spake* S E R M.  
I.  
*Not unto your Fathers, nor commanded*  
*them, in the day that I brought them out of*  
*the Land of Egypt, concerning Burnt-off-*  
*erings or Sacrifices ; but This thing com-*  
*manded I them, saying, Obey my Voice.*  
The two parts of this sentence of the Prophet, are not to be taken separately, as if he affirmed that God did *not* require Burnt-offerings *at all* ; ( for 'tis certain he *did* command them in most express words in the Law ; ) but the whole is to be understood together, that God did not *insist upon Burnt-Offerings so much*, as upon Obedience to the Commandments of the *moral Law*. There is a like expression, *Hos. vi. 6* ; *I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice*. The meaning is not, that God did *not* require Sacrifice ; but that he desired Mercy *rather* than Sacrifice, and ( as it follows in the very next words, ) *the Knowledge of the Lord more than Burnt-offerings*.

IN the *New Testament*, the same manner of expression, agreeable to the nature of the *Jewish* language, is likewise frequently

S E R M. quently used; and 'tis necessary to be taken  
 I. ken notice of, in order to the true Understanding of several Passages. *Job. xvii. 9; I pray not for the world*, says our Saviour, *but for them which thou hast given me*. His meaning is; not, that he did not *at all* desire the conversion and Salvation of the *Whole World*; but that his principal and particular Regard, in the Petitions he was at This time putting up, was towards those who at present actually believed on his Name. Again, in his Discourse with the Woman of *Canaan*; *Matt. xv. 24: I am not sent*, says he, *but to the lost Sheep of the house of Israel*. The meaning is not absolute, (as might seem from the first part of the sentence,) that he was *not sent at all* to any others than the *Jews* only; but that he was not sent so *soon*, so *immediately*, so *principally*; his mission was not to be made known so *early*, to any other nation, as to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*. For, that he was also, in process of time, to be a Light to lighten the *Gentiles*, as well as to be the glory of his people *Israel*, the Scriptures of the Prophets expressly enough declared;



clared; and our Saviour himself in this S E R M.  
 very place sufficiently intimates, when I.  
 immediately after That seeming Refusal,   
 yet he effectually granted this Stranger's  
 request, by healing the infirmity of her  
 daughter. And in his instructions to his  
 Disciples, ch. x. 5; he speaks with less  
 obscurity: *Go not into the way of the*  
*Gentiles; ---- but go rather to the lost sheep*  
*of the house of Israel.* Which afterwards  
 was still more clearly express'd; *Acts xiii.*  
*46; It was necessary that the word of God*  
*should first be spoken to the Jews, but af-*  
*terwards to the Gentiles.*

IN St Paul's Epistles, there are many  
 Instances of the like manner of speaking.  
*1 Tim. ii. 14; Adam was not deceived, but*  
*the woman being deceived was in the trans-*  
*gression:* His Meaning is not to say, that  
*Adam was not deceived at all;* but that  
 the Woman being *first* deceived, began  
 the transgression. *1 Cor. vi. 12; All things*  
*are lawful for me, but all things are not*  
*expedient:* He never intended to affirm,  
 that all Actions were lawful; but that of  
 those Actions which were confessedly  
 lawful, yet it did not follow that they  
 were

S E R M. were All expedient. In the same epistle,  
 I. ch. i. 17; *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel*: He does not mean absolutely, that he was not to baptize at all; but that his proper and peculiar Office, was not so much to baptize men with his own hands, as to preach the Gospel to them in order to their conversion. To mention but One place more; *Rom. vi. 17; God be thanked, says he, that ye were the Servants of Sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart That Form of Doctrine which was delivered you.* According to the manner of speaking in modern languages, it must needs seem a very strange and unusual expression; *God be thanked, that ye were the Servants of Sin*: But in the *Jewish* Idiom it was very intelligible, that the Two parts of the sentence should be taken as One: *God be thanked, for that ye, who Formerly were the Servants of Sin, have Now obeyed from the Heart That Form of Doctrine which was delivered you.*

AND thus therefore likewise in the words of the Text; if the connexion of the whole be considered, and the two parts

parts of the Sentence be united in one ; S E R M.  
 ( *Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink,---- but seek* I.  
*ye first the Kingdom of God; )* the sense, 'tis  
 very clear, will be *comparative*, and amount only to This: Be not *so* solicitous for the things of this *present* life, as to neglect the more important Concerns of That which is *to come* : But let your *principal* and *chief* Care be to secure your *eternal* Interest; and the Blessing of Providence upon your ordinary industry, will provide you such a proportion of *temporal* accommodations, as he shall see best and most expedient for you. In some particular cases, God has given extraordinary Examples of this kind: As in the instance of *Solomon*, 1 Kings iii. 11; *God said unto him, Because thou hast-----not asked for thy self---- riches,---- nor---- the life of thine enemies, but---- Understanding to discern judgment; Behold I have----- given thee a wise and an understanding heart; ---- and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both Riches and Honour.* Our Saviour does not promise any thing of this nature to his Disciples,  
 be-

S E R M. because his Kingdom is not of this world.

I. But a competency of temporal Blessings he encourages them to expect shall be added unto them ; always excepting the case of persecution, to which is annexed a Promise of peculiar Rewards.

III. Thirdly ; I O B S E R V E further, that the Precept in the Text, when considered as a *general* Command to *all* Christians, appears plainly intended to be understood with some latitude, from the *Reason* assigned by our Lord in the very words themselves, For *after all these things do the Gentiles seek. Take no Thought what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; For, after all these things do the Gentiles seek.* The thing therefore here prohibited by our Lord to *His* Disciples, is *such* a solicitude after the affairs of the World, as the *Gentiles* have, who *know not God* ; who have neither a right Sense of the *Providence* of God, in disposing of all *temporal* things here upon *earth* ; nor That certain expectation, which the Gospel has given us, of an *eternal* Kingdom hereafter in the *Heavens*. These men, (excepting some few Noble Spirits among them,

them, of whom the World was not worthy ; ) the generality of them lived according to that Epicurean Maxim, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die* ; placing the whole of their happiness in *such* enjoyments, as they possessed in common with the Beasts that perish. Which gratifications of sense, our Saviour commanded *His* Disciples to have no regard for, *comparatively* with their Care for the Concerns of Eternity. S E R M.  
I.

IV. *Fourthly* and *Lastly* ; T H A T the words of the Text, when applied to *all Christians in general*, are not to be understood in the strict and *literal* Sense, but in *That comparative* manner I have now explained ; appears further from the *additional reason* subjoined by our Saviour in the *last* clause : *For your heavenly Father knoweth, that ye have need of all these things.* Our heavenly Father's *knowing that we have need of all these things*, is not a reason against our taking Thought for them in *That method* of Labour and honest Industry, by which he himself, who *knows that we have need of them*, has appointed them to be obtained ; but 'tis a reason  
only

S E R M. only against *such* sollicitude about them,  
 I. as implies either a *Distrusting* of his Providence, or the not having a right *sense* of it, or not making a just *acknowledgment* of it in all things. The manner of our Saviour's arguing in this particular, is exactly parallel to the directions we find him giving in This very chapter, concerning *Prayer*. Ver. 7; *Ye*, says he, *when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking: Be not ye therefore like unto Them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.* The expression is very nearly the same as in the words of the Text, *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* Yet in the very next words, ver. 9, he instructs them *how* they should pray for those very things, their want of which, he had just told them, God perfectly knew before-hand: *After This manner (says he) pray ye; Our Father which art in Heaven,---- give us this day our daily Bread.* As therefore our Saviour in his instructions about *Prayer*, by telling his Disciples



Disciples that their heavenly Father knows S E R M.

*what things they have need of, before they ask him;* does not encourage them to forbear Praying *at all*, but directs them to pray in *such a manner* as is most proper to express their just Acknowledgment of *Him*, and entire Dependence upon *Him*, whom they know to be before-hand perfectly acquainted with all their Wants: So in the *Text* likewise, by telling us that our Father knows *we have need of all these things*, 'tis plain he does not mean to encourage us (in general and ordinary cases) to neglect the usual and natural means of providing for our Subsistence; but only (as I before observed) forbids *such* a Sollicitude about Worldly Affairs, as implies either a *Distrusting* of God's Providence, or the not having a right *Sense* of it, or not making a just *acknowledgment* of it in all things. A Disciple of Christ, must have it constantly and habitually impress'd upon his Mind, that 'tis our *heavenly Father* who continually supplies us with necessaries, for the *Preservation* of that Being which he at first *Gave* us: That 'tis *He* who *causes* His Sun

S E R M. *to rise, and sends us Rain and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness: That 'tis He who (in the Psalmist's expression) maketh the Grass to grow upon the mountains; giving even to the Beast his food, and to the young Ravens which cry; and filling all things Living, with plenteousness: Or, as our Saviour himself describes it still more sublimely, in the words just before my Text; Behold (says he) the Fowls of the Air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth Them: And, consider the Lilies of the Field;---- they toil not, neither do they spin; And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of Them: Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall be not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith? What men careless and ignorant of the Truth, usually and vulgarly stile Natural Causes, are indeed nothing but mere inanimate Instruments in the hands of God; and the Course of Nature, as 'tis commonly called, is, in the truth and*  
*reality*



reality of things, a mere *empty Name*, any S E R M.  
 otherwise than as signifying, by an ab- I.  
 stract way of speaking, the *regularity* of ~  
*His Operations* who made and governs  
 all things. 'Tis *He alone* therefore, who  
*gives us richly all things to enjoy*; even  
 all *those* things, which, in a vulgar and  
 careless way of speaking, we usually as-  
 cribe to *natural* and *inanimate Causes*.  
 Which very same Causes, whensoever he  
 pleases, he can make to be the Instruments  
 of our *Punishment* as well as of our *Sup-*  
*port*. He can (as *Moses* elegantly ex-  
 presses it; he can) *make the Heavens to be*  
*Brass, and the Earth Iron*: He can *scorch*  
 with Drought, or *drown* with Moisture,  
 or *blast* with unwholesome Winds, in or-  
 der to destroy with Famine, and *make a*  
*fruitful land barren for the Wickedness of*  
*them that dwell therein*: Or, without re-  
 moving the *Blessings themselves* of Nature,  
 he can at any time withdraw the *Be-*  
*nefit* and the *Effect* of them. For *man*  
*liveth not by Bread alone, but by every*  
*word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of*  
*God*; that is, by *His Blessing* upon the  
 instruments of Nature. Which Blessing

S E R M.

I.



whensoever he pleases to withdraw, and with Rebukes doth chasten man for Sin, he maketh his Beauty to consume away, as it were a Moth fretting a garment; Ps. xxxix. 11. Without the divine Blessing therefore, all Care, all Labour, all industry is in vain; nay, even the very Possession of all temporal good things, will afford no enjoyment. But *They* who, by seeking with their first and chief care the righteousness of God's Kingdom, have secured to themselves *His* Favour and Blessing, may safely depend and rely upon His Providence, that He who feeds the *Fowls of the Air*, and clothes even the *Lilies of the Field*, will much more take care of *Them*. Not in the way of *idleness* and *sloth*: For *similitudes* are not to be applied *literally*: But, in proportion to the natures of the things compared, he who provides for the *Fowls of the Air* and the *Lilies of the Field* in a way suitable to *Their* nature, will much more provide for *Men* in a way suitable to *Ours*: Either after a *super-natural* manner, in such extraordinary cases as was that of the Apostle's Mission to preach the Gospel; or else

else, in *ordinary* Cases, by the *natural* S E R M.  
means of Labour and Industry, whereby I.  
God has appointed that the Earth shall  
bring forth her increase. In the Use of  
which means, 'tis our Duty to rely upon  
Providence for his Blessing on the Effect.  
*If any would not work, says St Paul, nei-*  
*ther should he eat :* And yet the same A-  
postle exhorts, *Phil. iv. 6, Be careful for*  
*nothing, but in every thing by prayer and*  
*supplication let your requests be made known*  
*unto God.* This is taking Thought for  
the things of the World, not as the *Gen-*  
*tiles* who know not God, but as those  
who consider that our *heavenly Father*  
*knoweth that we have need of all these*  
*things.*

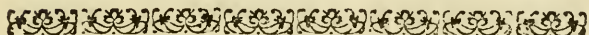






# S E R M O N II.

Of Forgiveness of Injuries.



EPHES. iv. 32. latter part.

*Forgiving one another, even as God, for  
Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.*



IS the constant Method of S E R M.  
St Paul in all his Epistles, II.  
after he has finished the *par-*  
*ticular* Subject upon occasion  
of which the Epistle was  
written, to add in the close of his Dis-  
course such *general* exhortations to the  
practice of Virtue, as might be of Use,  
not only in *That Age*, and to *That par-*  
*ticular Church* to which the Epistle was  
written, but to *all Christians at all times*

S E R M. and in *all places*; and might most effectually secure them against all such corruptions either in Faith or Practice, as he foresaw would be of the worst consequence in hindring the great Ends of the Gospel of Christ. The Great and Principal Design of the Gospel, is to reconcile men to *God*, and to *each Other*: to establish in the World, upon the Foundation of a just regard to *God*, universal Peace and Love and Good-Will amongst *Men*. The most dangerous Evil, and most destructive of this great Design of Christianity, is mens suffering their *Passions* and *worldly Views* to intermix with their Religion. By which means, the very things which Religion was chiefly intended to *prevent*, are, among ignorant and deluded men, following their *Passions* instead of their reason, *promoted principally* by what they take to be a strong Concern for Religion itself. Hence *the Salt*, (as our Saviour in a most lively comparison expresses this matter;) *the Salt*, *wherewith* things *should be seasoned*, does itself *lose its Savour*. Hence *the Light*, (as he in another place most significantly expresses



expresses the same thing; ) *the very Light* S E R M.  
*which is in men, becomes Darknes: And* II.  
*Satan, on the contrary, is hereby trans-*  
*formed into an Angel of Light. From*  
*whence (says the Apostle St James) come*  
*wars and fightings among you? that is,*  
*hatred, contentions and animosities among*  
*Christians? Come they from any real*  
*and serious Concern, for the Honour of*  
*God or for the Welfare of Mankind? No,*  
*saith he; but from your Lusts that war*  
*in your members; that is, from your Pas-*  
*sions and Worldly Views. This being so*  
*great and dangerous an Evil, and yet so*  
*very apt to spread among all Parties of*  
*Men; there is therefore no exhortation*  
*so often repeated, so perpetually incul-*  
*cated, so constantly and earnestly pressed,*  
*in all the Books of the New Testament;*  
*as upon This Head, of the obligation*  
*Christians are under to promote universal*  
*Love and Good-Will amongst Men. With*  
*This the Apostle St Paul begins the chap-*  
*ter, whereof my Text is a part: ver. 1;*  
*I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord be-*  
*seech you, that ye walk worthy of the vo-*  
*cation wherewith ye are called; With all*  
*lowli-*

S E R M. lowliness and meekness, with long-suffer-  
 II. ing, forbearing one another in love; En-  
 deavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit  
 in the bond of peace. Arguments and Mo-  
 tives to This, he proceeds to alledge  
 throughout the *Whole chapter*. And with  
 This he at the end concludes, ver. 30;  
*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, where-  
 by ye are sealed unto the day of redemp-  
 tion: Let all bitterness and wrath and an-  
 ger and clamour and evil-speaking be put  
 away from you, with all malice: And be  
 ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, for-  
 giving one another, even as God for Christ's  
 sake hath forgiven you.*

I N discoursing more particularly upon  
 which *last words*; *forgiving one another,  
 even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven  
 you*: I shall endeavour to show, 1<sup>st</sup>, that  
 good Christians *have their past Sins for-  
 given*; and that the original Ground and  
 Motive of that Forgiveness, is the *Good-  
 ness of God*: *God has forgiven you*. 2<sup>dly</sup>,  
 That the *particular Method*, in which  
 the Goodness of God has thought fit to  
 manifest itself in this Forgiveness of Sin,  
 is through the *intercession of Christ*: *God,*  
 for



for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. 3dly, S E R M.  
 That the *Condition* of this Forgiveness II.  
 thro' Christ, is the Supposition of *such a*  
*Repentance*, the Fruit and Evidence where-  
 of is our *Readiness to forgive each other* :  
*Forgiving one another, even as God for*  
*Christ's sake has forgiven you.*

1st and 2d ; T H E Two first of these,  
 I shall consider *Together* : That good  
 Christians *have their past Sins forgiven* ;  
 that the *original Ground or Motive* of that  
 Forgiveness, is the essential and eternal  
*Goodness of God* ; and that *the particular*  
*Method*, in which the Goodness of God has  
 thought fit to manifest itself in this For-  
 giveness of Sin, is *through the intercession*  
*of Christ*. The Duty of rational crea-  
 tures, who are made capable of discerning  
 between Good and Evil, is to obey at all  
 times the Commands of God. And when-  
 soever they knowingly and presumptu-  
 ously transgress against the Light he has  
 given them, the natural and just Punish-  
 ment of such Transgression is Death.  
 Even upon *innocent* Beings, who may be  
 supposed never to have transgressed at all,  
 God is under *no obligation* to bestow im-  
 mortality.

S E R M. *mortality.* For He who has Power over  
 II. all, may, without wrong to Any, do what  
 he pleases with his own; and That *Life*,  
 which to all the intelligent Beings in the  
 Universe is originally his Free Gift, he  
 may freely continue to any of them for  
 what portion of time he pleases; and  
 when their appointed period is run out,  
 and they have enjoyed the Effects of his  
 bountiful Goodness in their proper Share  
 of Being, he may, even *without* conside-  
 ration of Sin, *again* as freely take it away.  
*Much more*, when rational Beings have  
*rebelled* against him, by presumptuously  
 transgressing the Laws of everlasting righ-  
 teousness; may he justly cut them short  
 in displeasure, and by an exemplary Sen-  
 tence of righteous judgment, inflict upon  
 them the *Punishment of Death*. For,  
 what our Saviour declares in a *particular*  
 case, that God could easily, if he pleased,  
 destroy the whole nation of the impeni-  
 tent *Jews*, and *raise up*, even *out of the*  
*Stones of the Street, children unto Abra-*  
*ham*; is no less true *universally*, that God  
 can at any time destroy with exemplary  
 Judgments *Any disobedient Creatures*, and  
 create

create to himself *Others*, with the same S E R M. ease as he did *Them* at first, to undergo II. a new Probation of obedience. Nevertheless, from the consideration of the divine *Goodness*, they who have formerly been disobedient, and are now convinced of the unreasonableness of being so, and are sincerely resolved to do what is right for the future; find a reasonable ground and foundation of *Hope*, that God, in his great Forbearance, will still make a further Trial of *Them*, and accept instead of Innocence their sincere Amendment. And This, which, in the Arguments of Nature, is *but* Hope; is, in the declarations of the Gospel, an assured Promise; that if a Sinner forsakes his unrighteous ways, and does for the Future That which is lawful and right, he *shall* save his Soul alive. The *original Ground* or *Motive* of this Forgiveness, is the essential *Goodness of God*. For He who has Power over all, may remit as much of his own Right as he pleases; and This, upon what Terms and Conditions he himself alone, who is under no controul, shall in his own divine wisdom think fit to appoint

S E R M. point and to accept. For if, even in  
 II. *Humane* Judicatures, a Judge is not to  
 condemn, or to acquit, according to the  
 Affections or Expectations of the Specta-  
 tors, but according to his own more per-  
 fect Knowledge of the Law and of the  
*Fact*; much more is it reasonable that  
 God, whose Judgment is unerring, and  
 his Knowledge infallible, should *have*  
*mercy on whom he will have mercy; and*  
*compassion, not arbitrarily, but on whom he*  
*himself sees it fit to have compassion.* By  
*original Right* therefore, God *may* appoint  
 what Terms of Forgiveness he pleases.  
 In *Fact*, the Method wherein the divine  
 Goodness *has* thought fit *actually* to ma-  
 nifest itself in the Forgiveness of Sin, is  
*thro' the intercession of Christ.* God, for  
 Christ's sake, *has forgiven you.* Not that  
 God, who, by the essential Rectitude of  
 his Nature, acts always according to per-  
 fect Right and Reason; can be any way  
*changed, or have any affection moved in*  
*him, by the interposition of any Intercessor*  
*whatsoever: But that, being of purer eyes*  
*than to behold iniquity, and intending to*  
 show the greatest possible discountenance

to

to Sin in the very Method of forgiving S E R M.  
 it, he thought fit to annex the *Declara-* II.  
*tions of Pardon to the Death of the Me-*  
*diator.* And therefore the words in the  
 Text, which we render, *God for Christ's*  
*sake has forgiven you* ; are in the Original  
 more accurate and expressive, *God hath*  
*forgiven you* In Christ ; that is, he has in  
 the dispensation and by the Terms of the  
 Gospel of Christ, declared his acceptance  
 of your Repentance. From This confi-  
 deration, 'tis easy to give a satisfactory  
 Answer to the Principal and most Mate-  
 rial Objection of Unbelievers ; who, in  
 opposition to the Great Doctrine of the  
 Gospel, alledge, that God being always  
 necessarily Omnipresent, and consequently  
*himself* at all times ready to hear the  
 Prayers of all men, therefore there could  
 be no need of appointing any *Mediator* ;  
 and that God being of himself, essentially  
 in his nature, always disposed to do what  
 is right and fit, therefore his Purposes  
 can no way be changed by the interpo-  
 sition of any *Intercessor* : To This objec-  
 tion, I say, 'tis easy, from what has been  
 said, to give a just and sufficient Answer.

For

S E R M. For the Design of a Mediator or Intercessor being appointed with God, was not  
 II. as if God could be moved, as mortal men are, by *Perswasion* to do what otherwise he would not have thought right to be done: But the Design of it was, that God would testify his Hatred and Indignation against Sin, by consigning the Pardon of it thro' the Blood of the *Mediator*. From hence also it appears, that as on the one hand the *intercession of Christ* is not at all of the less value, because the eternal and essential *Goodness of God* was the original Ground or Motive of our obtaining Forgiveness thro' *That intercession*; so neither on the other hand is the *Goodness of God* less to be acknowledged, or the Pardon of Sin less *Free*, because the *Method* in which God was pleased to manifest this Free Goodness, was through the *intercession of Christ*. For he, who, in voluntary compliance with his Father's good pleasure, laid down his life for the redemption and salvation of Men; did *himself* love us, and give himself for us, a ransom and propitiation for Sin. And at the same time,



time, He, who having Power over all, was S E R M.  
 pleased to appoint and to accept on our II.  
 behalf this intercession of his Son; may  
 with as much Truth be affirmed to have  
 forgiven us *Freely*, of his own *Grace and*  
*Goodness*, as if he had done it *without* any  
 intercession at all. The Scripture always  
 expresses this matter accurately, with great  
 and exact distinctness, and with high ac-  
 knowledgment of the original and essen-  
 tial *Goodness* of the God and Father of  
 all. Our Saviour himself, *Job. iii. 16*;  
*God (says he) so loved the World, that*  
*he gave his only begotten Son, that whoso-*  
*ever believeth in him should not perish, but*  
*have everlasting life.* And the Apostle  
*St John* in like manner in his *1st epistle*,  
*ch. iv. 9*; *In This, says he, was manifest-*  
*ed the Love of God towards us, because*  
*that God sent his only begotten Son into the*  
*World, that we might live through Him.*

AND This is a sufficient Explication of  
 the *two first particulars* I proposed to dis-  
 course upon from the Text; that good  
 Christians *have their past Sins forgiven*;  
 that the *original Ground or Motive* of  
 That Forgiveness, is the *Goodness of God*;

S E R M. and that the *particular Method*, in which  
 II. the Goodness of God has thought fit to  
 manifest itself in this Forgiveness of Sin,  
 is *through the intercession of Christ*. The

*Third and last Observation* was, that  
 the *Condition* of this Forgiveness thro'  
 Christ, is the Supposition of *such a Re-  
 pentance*, the Fruit and Evidence whereof  
 is our *Readiness to forgive each other* :  
*Forgiving one another, even as God for  
 Christ's sake has forgiven you*. In all Pro-  
 mises of Pardon, there is always, either  
 express'd or understood, a *Supposition of  
 Repentance*. And by *Repentance*, is al-  
 ways meant, not a *bare Sorrow for Sin* ;  
 (for, *That* there cannot but be, even in  
 the *Place of Torment* ; ) but by *True Re-  
 pentance*, is always meant, an actual *For-  
 saking and Amending* of the Fault repent-  
 ed of. And not *That only in particular* ;  
 but it includes also that there be *in gene-  
 ral* such a disposition of Mind, as *becomes*  
 a penitent and forgiven Sinner : A dispo-  
 sition of Mind, *desirous* to show forth  
 the Sincerity of its Repentance by the  
 Thankful Expressions of an *universal O-  
 bedience*, and by *imitation of Him* whom



we adore for having forgiven us. One S E R M.  
principal part of which imitation, is our II.



being ready, upon all reasonable occasions, to forgive *Others*, even as *He* has freely forgiven *Us*. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against Any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye; Col. iii. 13. And Ephes. v. 2; Walk in love, as Christ also has loved Us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour. To God himself, who is infinitely self-sufficient to his own Happiness, we are capable of making no Recompence, no Return, for all the Benefits that he has done unto us: And therefore he is pleased to accept our kind and charitable behaviour towards each other, as a Regard paid immediately to Him; and he requires it of us, as the most proper and suitable Expression of our having a due Sense of His mercy and goodness towards us all. If thy Brother trespass against thee, says our Saviour, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him: And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee,*

S E R M. saying, *I repent; thou shalt forgive him:*  
 II. Luke xvii. 4. Nay, St Matthew adds,  
 not until seven times only, but until seventy  
 times seven; ch. xviii. 22. Nay, our Sa-  
 viour carries this matter still further; and,  
 in imitation of God who is kind to the  
 unthankful and to the evil, he commands  
 us, Matt. v. 44, to Love even our Ene-  
 mies, to bless them that curse us, to do  
 good to them that hate us, and to pray  
 for them which despitefully use us, and per-  
 secute us. Which Argument the Apostle  
 St Peter enforces from the example like-  
 wise of Christ; 1 Pet. iii. 9; *Not ren-  
 dring evil for evil, or railing for railing,  
 but contrariwise Blessing: As Christ did;  
 who, when he was reviled, reviled not  
 again; when he suffered, he threatned not;  
 but committed himself to Him that judgeth  
 righteously.* The Meaning of all these and  
 the like Precepts, is; not that Christian  
 Magistrates are to neglect the punishing  
 of Malefactors; not that Private Chris-  
 tians are to forbear bringing publick Of-  
 fenders to Justice; not that it is not law-  
 ful for men to recover their private just  
 Dues by such Methods of Law and E-  
 quity,

1 Pet. ii.  
23.

## Of Forgiveness of Injuries.

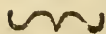
37

quity, as are in wise and Christian Coun-  
tries appointed for the administration of  
Justice; nor, lastly, that in *common life*,

S E R M.  
II.

we are in *such a sense* to forgive those who  
*continue* to wrong us, as that we needlessly  
and carelessly *trust* them, and as it were  
*tempt* them to wrong us *more*: But we  
are to forgive, until seventy times seven,  
(that is, perpetually,) those who *do re-  
pent*: And those who *do not repent*, but  
*persist* in injuring us, we are to *pray for*,  
and be willing to do acts of *charity and  
humanity* to them when need requires;  
and not be solicitous for *Revenge*, but  
much rather to desire their *Amendment*,  
and by all reasonable Means promote re-  
conciliation: And if at any time we are  
forced by the necessity of things, to have  
recourse to the *Magistrate* to do us right;  
we are even *then* to desire *only Equity* for  
*ourselves*, and not *vexation* and *needless  
damage* to our *Adversary*: In a word;  
'tis the Duty of the Disciples of Christ,  
to have in *general* a *kind and charitable  
disposition*; dealing with *Others* in all  
cases, and in all Circumstances, as we de-  
fire and in our daily Petitions are taught

S E R M. to pray, that God would be pleased to  
 II. deal with *Us*.



IN *This* sense, and according to *This* explication of the nature and limitations of the Duty of Forgiveness, the *Practice* of it may be enforced upon all *reasonable* persons by many *strong Arguments* and most *powerful Motives*. 'Tis *equitable* in the *nature of things*, that men conscious of their own Frailness, sensible of their own Weaknesses and Passions, and of their Aptness to be too soon and too often provoked; should be very ready to forgive and be reconciled to *Others*, considering (as the Apostle St Paul argues upon another occasion; *considering*) *Themselves*, lest They also be tempted. 'Tis *desirable* for the *inward Peace and Ease* of mens own Minds within themselves, that they should not be under the Power of *fretful Passions*, and the *lasting Resentments* of a revengeful Spirit; but that they be meek and gentle, peaceable and easy to be reconciled: Which Sweetness of Disposition, improved upon religious Principles into a Habit of Meekness, is a Virtue reflecting upon itself; That calm  
 and

and sedate Satisfaction, which is in a S E R M.  
*peculiar manner* a Reward to itself. Nor II.  
 is it less *beneficial to the Publick*; as being the great *Preservative* against that *Beginning of Strife*, which Solomon elegantly compares to the *letting out of Water*, Prov. xvii. 14; that is, 'tis the Opening of a Breach which no man can be sure to stop, before it proceeds to the fatallest and most calamitous events. Upon which account, excellent is the Advice of the Author of the Book of *Ecclus*, ch. xix. 13; *Admonish a friend; it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more. Admonish thy friend; it may be he hath not said it, and if he have, that he speak it not again.* ----- *There is one that slippeth in his Speech, but not from his heart; and who is he that hath not offended with his Tongue?*

THERE is, further, *another Motive* to the Practice of this Duty, urged by the Apostle St Paul; that it is really the *most effectual way*, finally and upon the whole, of *doing ourselves right*; Rom. xii. 19; *Dearly beloved, avenge not your*  
 D 4 *selves;*



S E R M. *selfes;----- for 'tis written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord: Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of Fire on his Head: Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good.* The Meaning is: Gentleness and Meekness and Easiness to forgive, is the most probable way of working upon men, if they be at all reasonable and capable of Amendment; and if on the contrary they be altogether incorrigible, then 'tis the certain and effectual Means of having God finally judge our cause. That This Phrase, *heaping coals of Fire upon his Head*, signifies the *Judgments of God* falling finally upon those, who maliciously and incorrigibly persist in oppressing such meek and charitable persons, as never give them any just provocation; is evident from the preceeding words, *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord*: And from the manner in which the whole Passage is express'd in the place from whence St Paul cites it, *Prov. xxv. 21; If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty,*

## Of Forgiveness of Injuries.

41

*thirsty, give him water to drink; For* SERM.  
*thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,* II.  
*and the Lord shall reward Thee: And from*  
*the other passages of Scripture, in which*  
*the very same phrase is used; Ps. cxi.*  
*10; Let burning coals fall upon them; And*  
*Is. xlvii. 14; (according to the Version*  
*of the lxx,) They shall be as stubble, the*  
*Fire shall burn them;----for thou hast*  
*coals of fire to heap upon them: And 2 Esdr.*  
*xvi. 53; Let not the Sinner say that he*  
*hath not sinned; for God shall burn coals*  
*of fire upon His head, who saith before*  
*the Lord God and his glory, I have not*  
*sinned.*

BUT, to draw towards a conclusion.  
The last and most powerful Motive to the  
Practice of the Duty before us, is the  
Argument urged in the Text; that God  
expects and requires it of us in the Con-  
ditions of the Gospel, that we should for-  
give one another, even as He, for Christ's  
sake, has forgiven Us. The Reasonable-  
ness of the condition, is well expressed by  
the Author of the book of Eccclus. ch.  
xxviii. 1; *He that revengeth, shall find*  
*vengeance from the Lord, and he will*  
*surely*



S E R M. *surely keep his Sins in remembrance. For-*  
 II. *give thy neighbour the hurt that he has done*  
 thee; so shall Thy Sins also be forgiven  
 when thou prayest. One man beareth Ha-  
 tred against another, and doth he seek par-  
 don from the Lord? He sheweth no mercy  
 to a Man which is like himself; and doth  
 he ask forgiveness of his Own Sins? What  
 is here argued as equitable in the nature  
 of the Thing, is by the Apostle declared to  
 be the Condition of the Gospel; Jam. ii.  
 13; He shall have judgment without mer-  
 cy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy  
 rejoiceth against Judgment. Our Lord  
 himself in That Prayer which he taught  
 his Disciples, commanded them to say; For-  
 give Us Our Trespases, in like manner as  
 we forgive them that trespass against Us:  
 And at the conclusion of the Prayer, he  
 enlarges upon the reason of that petition;  
 For (says he) if ye forgive men Their  
 Trespases, your heavenly Father will also  
 forgive you; But if ye forgive not men  
 their Trespases, neither will your Father  
 forgive your Trespases. The same thing  
 he inculcates in the parable of the King,  
 who having forgiven a Servant ten thousand  
 Talents,

Talents, revoked the Favour again, upon S E R M.  
 That Servant's refusing to forgive his II.  
 fellow-servant one hundred pence, *Matt.*  
*xviii. 33; shouldst not thou also have had*  
*compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I*  
*had pity on thee? Nay, so far does our*  
*Saviour carry this matter, as to advise*  
*Matt. v. 23; If thou bring thy gift to*  
*the altar, and there remembrest that thy*  
*Brother hath ought against thee; Leave*  
*there thy gift before the altar, and go thy*  
*way, first be reconciled to thy Brother,*  
*and then come and offer thy gift.*

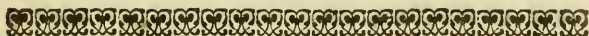






# S E R M O N III.

Of the Nature and End of the  
*Sabbath.*



M A R. ii. 27.

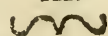
*And he said unto them, The Sabbath was  
made for Man, and not Man for the  
Sabbath.*



**I**T is very remarkable in the S E R M, whole History of our Saviour, III. that in all cases where neither any *natural necessity* nor *moral obligation* intervened to the contrary, *there* he was constantly most exact and nice, in fulfilling *every particular* even of the *ceremonial* Law. Thus when he came to *John the Baptist*; though, ha-  
ving

S E R M. ving no Sin, he had no need of the Bap-  
 III. tism of Repentance; and *John* accord-  
 ically *forbad him, saying, I have need to*  
*be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to*  
*Me?* yet he *insisted* upon it, saying, *suf-*  
*fer it to be so Now; for thus it becometh*  
*us to fulfill all Righteousness; Matt. iii. 15.*  
 But, on the contrary, *where-ever any real*  
*necessity of nature, or any moral obligation,*  
 any work of *Goodness, Mercy or Charity,*  
 came in competition; *there* he was al-  
 ways as zealous, that the work of *Good-*  
*ness or Charity* should take place of *any*  
*positive rite or ceremony* whatsoever. Thus  
 when the Pharisees reproached him, for  
 conversing familiarly with; and instruct-  
 ing, persons legally unclean; he replies,  
*Matt. ix. 13; Go ye and learn what that*  
*meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sa-*  
*crifice.* And when the Ruler of the Sy-  
 nagogue reviled him for healing a dis-  
 eased person upon the Sabbath-day, and  
 maliciously represented it to the people  
 as a Breach of the Command given to  
 keep That day Holy; he answers him,  
*Luke xiii. 15; Thou Hypocrite, Dost not*  
*each one of you on the Sabbath loose his Ox*  
 or

or his *Ass* from the Stall, and lead him a-  
 way to watering? and ought not this Wo-  
 man, being a daughter of Abraham, whom  
 Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years,  
 be loosed from this Bond on the Sabbath-  
 day? And, in the History which occa-  
 sioned the words of my Text; when the  
 Pharisees were angry at Jesus's Disciples,  
 for plucking a few ears of Corn on the  
 Sabbath-day, *Mar. ii. 24*; our Lord an-  
 swers them by giving an Instance out of  
 the History of the *Old Testament*, by which  
 it appeared that *in all times* even under  
 the Law, all *merely ritual and ceremonial*  
*institutions* always gave place to the *just*  
*and real Necessities* of Life. Immediately  
 after which, he adds in the words of the  
 Text, as a *general Ground* or *Reason* of  
 the thing itself, whereof he had just be-  
 fore alledged an *Instance in Practice*; The  
*Sabbath*, saith he, *was made for Man*, and  
*not Man for the Sabbath*. That is: Du-  
 ties of a *ritual* nature, and of *positive* ap-  
 pointment only, do not, like those Moral  
 Virtues, which are of *intrinsic, eternal*,  
 and *unalterable* obligation, indispensably  
 oblige in *all Cases* and in *all Circumstan-*  
 ces


S E R M.  
 III.  




S E R M. ces whatsoever; but were appointed of  
 III. God, only for the present Use of Man,  
 to be subservient and assisting to the more  
 convenient Practice of the Great Duties  
 of Religion.

FROM these words therefore of our Saviour, I shall in the following Discourse consider the *Nature and Ends* of the *original institution* of the *Sabbath*, and *to what Degrees and Purposes* it *still* continues *obligatory* among *Christians*. In general : As 'tis absolutely necessary in the first Foundation of Religion, that we know distinctly *Whom* we are to worship, and in *what manner* ; so 'tis necessary likewise in the Nature of things, that some *Portion* of *Time* be allowed for *instructing* ourselves in the *Knowledge* of our Duty, and for the *Practice* peculiarly of That especial part of it, which consists in the *publick Acknowledgment* and solemn *Worship* of God. And *herein* consists the *general Morality* of the Sabbath, and the *eternal reason* of its having perpetually a place among the unalterable Commandments of the Moral Law. For as necessary as it is, that *Religion* should be *at all*  
 pre-

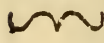


preserved in the World, so necessary it S E R M.  
 is that *some Time* should be set apart for III.  
 mens *instruction* in the *Will* of God, and   
 for their *solemnizing* his *Worship*.

BUT to be *more distinct* and *particular*: The *Ends* for which the Sabbath was *originally* instituted, and for which the Command was from time to time *renewed*; were principally as follows.


1<sup>st</sup>; THAT men might continually commemorate the works of *Creation*, and, acknowledging the *One True God* and *Author of all things*, might praise him perpetually for the things that he has made. *Rev. iv. 11*; The *Worship* paid to God in *Heaven* is thus represented to *St John* in his *Vision*; The whole multitude of the heavenly host fall down before him that sits on the *Throne*, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; For thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they Are, and were created.* This is the employment of *Saints* and *Angels*, in the *eternal Sabbath* in *Heaven*; And that, upon *Earth*, the *Praises* of God may be celebrated on

S E R M. the same account, is the original Founda-  
 III. tion of the institution of the *Sabbath*.

 Gen. ii. 3 ; *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it ; because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.* Which reason is again repeated, *Exod. xx. 11 ; For in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day ; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it.* 'Tis here to be observed, that the word, *rested*, is by no means to be understood *literally*, as if the Creating of things had been any *Pains* or *Labour* to God : For 'tis *absurd*, that any thing should give any *Trouble* to *Omnipotence*. By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the Breath of his Mouth ; He spake the word, and they were made ; he commanded, and they stood fast. The Meaning is : He made them all with as great Ease, as if it had been no Action at all, but merely a word speaking. His *Resting* therefore after it, is ( I say ) by no means to be understood *literally* ; But God's *resting*, signifies merely, that the things



things were *finished* which he intended to make at That time, and that he *Then* proceeded no further. Likewise, things being made in *six days*, is not, that there was any thing in the Nature of Things, which *required* That *Space* of Time for their Production. For the Production of Things in *six days*, is as *miraculous*, as the producing of them in *one single moment* ; and the producing of them in *one moment*, had been just as easy to God, as the creating them in *six days*. But 'tis only for the sake of *Our greater distinctness of Conception*, that things were digested in That particular Order and *Portion of Time*. And our perpetual Returns of Praises to God for the things that he has made, offered up to him every Sabbath, are a *Mark* or distinguishing *Character* of the Worshippers of the *True God* ; a *declaration* or *continual professing* of ourselves to be Servants of the *One Almighty and True God*, the *Father or Author of all things*, the *Maker of Heaven and Earth* : in opposition to the *Infidelity* of *Atheists*, the *Superstition* of *Polytheists*, and the *irreligious Worship* of all the *idolatrous Na-*

S E R M. *tions of the Earth. Exod. xxxi. 13, 17 ;*  
 III. *Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep ; For it is*  
  
*a Sign between Me and You,-----that ye*  
*may know that I am the Lord ; ----It is*  
*a Sign between Me and the children of*  
*Israel for ever ; For in six days the Lord*  
*made Heaven and Earth. Of ignorant and*  
*profane men, Some have imagined the*  
*World to exist by Necessity of Nature ; not*  
*considering, that in what arises from ne-*  
*cessity, there can be no variety or distin-*  
*ction : And these persons, cannot but be*  
*totally void of all Religion. Others, have*  
*fancied the World to have been framed*  
*originally by mere Chance ; not consider-*  
*ing, that Chance is nothing, and can do no-*  
*thing, being a mere empty Word or Sound :*  
*And these likewise, must needs be abso-*  
*lutely without Religion. Others, have per-*  
*swaded themselves, that the Sun, Moon,*  
*and Stars, were Gods, or the Habitations*  
*of Gods, or the Powers that governed the*  
*World : And These were the idolatrous*  
*Worshippers of the Host of Heaven. Con-*  
*cerning which Crime, Job thus expresses*  
*himself with his accustomed Eloquence,*  
*ch. xxxi. 26 ; If I beheld the Sun when it*  
*shined,*

*shined, or the Moon walking in brightness; S E R M. III.*  
*and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or*  
*my Mouth hath kiss'd my hand; This also*  
*were an iniquity to be punished by the*  
*Judge, for I should have denied the God*  
*that is above. The Great Preservative*  
*against every Fault of this kind, either*  
*idolatrous or atheistical; is the considera-*  
*tion that the Whole Universe, and all*  
*things therein contained, are the Creation*  
*of God; That the Moon and Stars them-*  
*selves, are all of them the work of his*  
*hands; and that 'tis our heavenly Father*  
*which causeth His Sun (so our Saviour*  
*emphatically expresses it,) he causeth His*  
*Sun to shine on the Evil and on the Good,*  
*and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the*  
*Unjust. This is, what even by Reason it-*  
*self may be strictly proved, to those who*  
*are capable of attending to it: His eter-*  
*nal Power and Godhead, are clearly seen*  
*by the things that are made; Rom. i. 20.*  
*By Revelation, the same Great Truth is*  
*clearly confirmed to persons of all Capa-*  
*cities. And the first institution of the*  
*Sabbath, was on purpose, that men pe-*  
*riodically celebrating the Creation of God,*



S E R M. might thereby be preserved from irreligion and idolatry. Deut. iv. 19; *Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto Heaven, and when thou seest the Sun and the Moon and the Stars, even all the Host of Heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all Nations under the whole Heaven.* This was the Idolatry Mankind was apt to run into, in the *early* Ages of the World; and it continues *still* among some barbarous Nations even at *This day*. But the more prevailing Vice in these latter Ages, among men of corrupt Minds in civilized Nations; are *Atheistical* Notions, of *Necessity, Fate, and Nature*. The proper Remedy against Both these Great Evils, of *Idolatry and Atheism*; is a serious consideration of the manifold *Wisdom and Excellency* of the *Works of God*, which show forth the *Praise and Glory* of their *Almighty Creator*. O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise him and magnify him for ever. Ps. cxlviii. 3; Praise ye him, Sun and Moon; praise him, all ye Stars of Light;----- Mountains and all Hills;----- Beasts and all Cattle;-----



*Fire and hail, snow and vapour, storms and wind fulfilling his Word.* 'Tis a very elegant, and *expressive* Figure of Speech; to represent All, even *inanimate* creatures, as *Themselves* praising God; because the *contemplation* of them affords to reasonable *Men*, perpetual *Grounds* of Praising him. I have been the longer upon this *First* Head, because This *original* reason of the institution of the Sabbath, is of *eternal* and *unchangeable* Consideration.

2dly; ANOTHER reason, which was added upon occasion of *renewing* this institution to the *Jews*, was that they might *commemorate* their Deliverance out of the Land of *Egypt*, which to *That People* was as it were a *New Creation*. Deut. v. 15; *Remember that thou wast a Servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought thee out thence by a stretched-out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.* This *additional* reason, was *peculiar* to the nation of the *Jews only*; and consequently so were the *additional Circumstances*, which were then annexed, with regard to the *Manner* of performing the Duty. Of

S E R M. which kind, was that *absolute and strict*  
 III. *Rest from every sort of Work* whatsoever,  
 which was a proper commemoration of  
 their deliverance from that Great Bond-  
 age, wherein they had in an unparallelled  
 manner been obliged to *work* and to *serve*  
*with rigour*. And because 'twas a Mani-  
 fest Contempt of This Great Deliverance,  
 and a *presumptuously wilful despising* of a  
*plain Command* of God, then immediately  
 and expressly given to That people; *there-*  
*fore*, however small the *Offence* may seem  
 as to the *Matter* of it, yet (which is al-  
 ways the main Circumstance of aggrava-  
 tion,) it being altogether inexcusable in  
 point of *wilful presumption*, the Man in  
 the Wilderness who did but *gather sticks*  
*upon the Sabbath-day*, was by God's espe-  
 cial direction commanded to be put to  
 death; Num. xv. 35. It was a *presump-*  
*tuous Contempt* of That *express* part of the  
 Command given at That time to That  
 people, Exod. xxxv. 3, 2; *Ye shall kindle*  
*no Fire throughout your Habitations upon*  
*the Sabbath-day; whosoever doth work*  
*therein, shall be put to death*. But this  
 rigorous exacting of an *absolute and strict*  
*Rest,*

*Rest*, was, as I have said, *peculiar* to the S E R M.  
Nation of the *Jews only*: As is evident III.  
from the *Reason* before-mentioned, relating to their deliverance out of *Egypt*; and is still more clear from the words of *St Paul*, Col. ii. 16; *Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of the new-moon or of the Sabbath-day; Which are a Shadow of things to come, but the Body (or Substance) is of Christ*: And from the words of our Saviour himself, immediately following the Text; *The Son of man, is Lord also of the Sabbath*.

3dly; ANOTHER additional Reason, upon renewing the institution of the Sabbath to the *Jews*; was, that *Servants*, and even *Cattle appointed for Labour*, might have a proportionable time of *Rest*. This reason is express'd in the *fourth Commandment*; And again more particularly, *Exod. xxiii. 12; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the Son of thine handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed*. And This reason, is partly ceremonial, partly moral. So far as the Commandment of giving Rest to *Servants*, was a Memorial to the *Israelites* of their having been them-

S E R M. *themselves* Servants in *Egypt*; so far it was  
 III. part of the *ritual* Law, and its obligation  
 extends not to other Nations. But so far  
 as the *reason* of the Commandment is  
 founded in *humanity*, and is opposite to  
*cruelty, severity and rigour*; so far it is  
 an *eternal* part of the *moral* Law, and  
 continues to be of *perpetual* obligation.  
 Unreasonable *Severity*, in exacting from  
 those under our Power, more than they  
 are well able to perform; is for ever a  
 Breach of this Commandment, and a  
 Temper altogether inconsistent with the  
 Spirit and Character of a good man. *A*  
*righteous man*, saith the Scripture, *regard-*  
*eth the Life even of his Beast*; Prov. xii.  
 10. And 'tis not without its proper Sig-  
 nificancy, in order to show men what  
 Spirit and Temper they should be of;  
 that God, in the giving of this Command-  
 ment, condescends to make mention even  
 of *Cattle*; and that our Saviour assures  
 us, that not a *Sparrow* falls to the ground,  
 without the Notice of our Father which  
 is in Heaven.

AND now from This Account of  
 the *Reasons* of the *original Institu-*  
*tion,*

tion, and of the repeated Renewals of S E R M.  
the Command concerning the Sabbath; III.  
'tis very easy to understand, how far and  
in what sense it is a perpetual Command-  
ment, and to what Degrees and Purposes  
it still continues obligatory among Chris-  
tians.

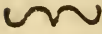
THE moral part of the Sabbath; that  
is, so far as it is a Commandment enjoyn-  
ing the virtue of *humanity*, or of allow-  
ing time to those who are under our  
Power, to rest from the Labours of their  
worldly employment; and so far as it is,  
according to the original reason of its in-  
stitution in Paradise, a time set apart for Gen. ii. 3.  
the religious commemorating of God's work  
of Creation, and praising him for the  
things that he has made, and serving and  
worshipping him as the Maker of all  
things; this moral part (I say) of the  
Sabbath, is of eternal and unchangeable  
Obligation. For the solemn Publick Wor-  
ship of God cannot possibly be perform-  
ed, without particular Times be set apart  
for the performing it, and for the instruct-  
ing men in the Knowledge of their Duty.  
The more carefully this is done, the more  
accept-

S E R M. acceptable to God are our days of devotion.  
 III. And they who by the *habitual* Practice of  
 Virtue, preserve *constantly* upon their  
 Minds a Sense of God and Religion in  
*all* the actions of their Lives; may be tru-  
 ly said, in the *Christian* sense, to keep a  
*perpetual* Sabbath. Upon which Account,  
 both the *Land of Canaan*, wherein the  
*Israelites* were to serve God *without fear*,  
*in holiness and righteousness before him all*  
*the days of their lives*; and the *heavenly*  
*Canaan*, whereof the other was but a  
 Type; are by St Paul figuratively repre-  
 sented under the Notion of an eternal  
*Sabbath* or *Rest* to the people of God, in  
 a very *elegant Allusion*: Without attend-  
 ing to which, there is considerable diffi-  
 culty in understanding the manner both of  
 his expression and argument: *Heb. iv. 3*;  
*Although* (saith he) *the works*, the works  
 of Creation, *were finished from the foun-*  
*dation of the World,----- and God did*  
*rest the seventh day from all his works*; yet  
 This was not the True Sabbath, (but only  
 as he elsewhere expresses it, *Col. ii. 17*;  
*it was a shadow of things to come*;) The  
 True



True Sabbath or *Rest*, to the people of S E R M.  
the *Jews*, was their entering into the *Pro-* III.  
*promised Land*, and *Therein* resting for ever  
from the labours they had underwent in  
*Egypt* and in the *Wilderness*: And *This*,  
he tells us, is the sense of the word, *Rest*,  
in those places, where God threatned and  
*swore* to the unbelieving *Israelites*, *that*  
*they should not enter into his Rest*; ch. iii. 11,  
18. But then still he goes on, and tells us  
further, that even *This* final *Rest* of *Theirs*,  
*the promised Land itself*; even *This* also  
was still but a *Type* of a *further* and better  
*Rest*, even the *eternal Sabbath in Heaven*:  
For if *Joshua*, says he, (ch. iv. 8, 7,) *had*  
*given them Rest*, then would not the *Scrip-*  
*ture afterward have spoken of another day*,  
as it does in *David*, saying *Again, To*  
*day, after so long a time. There remain-*  
*eth therefore* (infers the *Apostle*,) *there*  
*remaineth still a further Rest* (or *Sabbath*)  
*to the People of God*, ver. 9; that is, an  
eternal *Rest* in *Heaven*, from *Sin*, and  
from *Temptation*, and from all *Misery*.  
For so he goes on, ver. 10; *For He that*  
*is entred into his Rest, He also has ceased*  
*from his own works, as God did from His*:

*Let*

S E R M. *Let us labour therefore to enter into That*  
 III. *Rest, lest any man fall after the same ex-*  
 *ample of Unbelief.* By attending to, and  
 observing This *Allusion*, there is very great  
 Light given to the Apostle's *whole* Dis-  
 course in That 4th Chapter to the *He-*  
*brews*, which otherwise is difficult to be  
 distinctly and clearly understood. But to  
 proceed.

As the *Moral* part of the Command-  
 ment concerning the Sabbath, is of *per-*  
*petual* obligation; so the *ritual* or *insti-*  
*tuted* part, which had relation ( as a *par-*  
*ticular* Memorial) to the Deliverance of  
 the *Jews* out of *Egypt*, is abolished by the  
 Gospel. Infomuch that *St Paul*, in the  
 place before-cited, *Col. iii. 16, 17*; among  
*ordinances of meats and drinks, and new-*  
*moons, and other shadows of things to come,*  
 reckons up also *the Sabbath-days*. But  
 then, instead of the *Jewish* Sabbath, there  
 succeeded, by the appointment and Prac-  
 tice of the Apostles, the commemoration  
 of our Lord's *Resurrection*. Which com-  
 ing to pass upon the *first* day of the  
 Week, the Christian *Lord's day*, instead  
 of the *seventh* which was the *Jewish* Sab-  
 bath;

bath; it was accordingly from thenceforth S E R M.  
 kept on the *first day of the Week*. Thus III.  
 we read, *Acts xx. 7*; that *upon the first*  
*day of the Week, when the Disciples came*  
*together to break bread, Paul preached*  
*unto them.* And *1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2*; *Con-*  
*cerning the Collection for the Saints;-----*  
*upon the first day of the week, saith he, let*  
*every one of you lay by him in store, as God*  
*has prospered him.* And *Rev. i. 10*; it is,  
 by *St John*, expressed by Name: *I was,*  
 saith he, *in the Spirit on the Lord's day.*

THE Manner, in which it ought to  
 be observed among *Christians*, is, in at-  
 tending the Publick Worship of God, in  
 hearing the Word, in reading the Scrip-  
 tures; in instructing and assisting those,  
 over whom we have any kind of influ-  
 ence, in the Knowledge and Practice of  
 their Duty. In a word, it is to be spent  
 in works of *Necessity*, and in works of  
*Charity*; and in whatsoever tends, with-  
 out Superstition and without Affectation,  
 to the real Honour of God, and to the  
 true Interest and Promoting of Religion  
 and Virtue in the World. Concerning  
 works of *Necessity*; our Saviour in the  
 Text,

SERMON. Text, upon occasion of his Disciples  
 III. plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-  
 day, expressly exempts us from the Preciseness of the Pharisaical hypocrisy: *The Sabbath, saith he, was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.* Concerning works of *Charity*; these are so direct and proper, so great and principal a part of true Religion, that, as if it were *on purpose* to show these to be even the *most acceptable* part of That Rest which God commanded on the Sabbath, our Saviour seems, in the whole course of his Ministry, to have industriously as it were *sought for* all possible occasions of doing things of *This nature* upon the Sabbath-day, that he might thence take opportunity to reprove the false Notions which the Pharisees had entertained, both of *God's* resting from *His* work, and of his commanding *Them* to rest from *Theirs*. The careful observing of which matter, will clear to us the Sense of an *expression* of our Saviour, which otherwise is not obvious to be understood. When the *Jews* sought to slay him, because he had healed a lame man on the Sabbath-day; the Reply he makes

makes to them, is This, *Job. v. 17*; My <sup>S E R M.</sup>  
*Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* His <sup>III.</sup>  
 meaning is: *Ye have a very wrong No-*  
*tion of the true Sabbatical Rest which God*  
*has commanded: From his work of Crea-*  
*tion, God does indeed Now rest; but in*  
*Acts of Providence, Preservation, Govern-*  
*ment, and doing Good to his Creatures, in*  
*These things My Father worketh Hither-*  
*to, and will work for ever; And in these*  
*instances I also work, and every good*  
*man works, both on the Sabbath-day and*  
*continually.*

THE *Extremes* to be avoided, are; An  
 affected Judaical or Pharisaical *Preciseness*  
 on the *one* hand, which usually proceeds  
 either from *hypocrisy*, or from *want of un-*  
*derstanding rightly the true Nature of re-*  
*ligion*: And on the *other* hand, the *worse*  
 and *more dangerous* Extreme, is, That Ha-  
 bit of spending any part of the Lord's-day  
 in *Looseness* and *Idleness*, in *Gaming* and  
*Debauchery*, which has been encouraged  
 by *Popery*, and which has, to so *Many*  
 persons, been the *corruption* of their *Prin-*  
*ciples*, and the entire *Ruin* of their *Mo-*  
*rals.* From which and all other, &c.

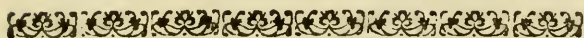






# S E R M O N IV.

The Parable of the Sower explained.



St LUKE viii. 15.

*But that on the good ground, are they,  
which in an honest and good heart, ha-  
ving heard the Word, keep it, and bring  
forth fruit with Patience.*



THESE Words are part of S E R M. IV.  
that Explication of the Pa-  
rable of the Sower, which  
our Saviour was pleased to  
give to his Disciples in pri-  
vate, after he had spoken the Parable it-  
self publicly in the hearing of the Mul-  
titude, without interpreting it to *Them* at

S E R M.

IV.



all. The *Reasons* of his making which great Difference between his Disciples and the rest of the People, were these two.

1<sup>st</sup>, Because the Disciples were intended by our Saviour to be Preachers of the word, to teach and explain it to *others*; and therefore it was very necessary that they should first be fully and particularly instructed, to understand every thing distinctly *themselves*. This reason we find our Saviour giving, St *Matt.* xiii. 51; where the Evangelist relating the same History of our Saviour's explaining this and some other Parables to his Disciples in private, adds at the conclusion, ver. 51; *Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, yea Lord: Then said he unto them, Therefore every Scribe which is instructed into the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old:* That is; He had given them these particular Instructions, expecting they should take care so to lay up his Doctrines in their Minds, as that they might be thoroughly qualified to be successful Preachers of the


the

the Gospel, and be able upon all Occa-  
 sions to bring forth out of their Memory,  
 as out of a well-furnished Store-house, in-  
 structions suited to Persons of all Capac-  
 ities. So that those who at present had  
 not these things explained to them, might  
 afterwards, as many of them as were ca-  
 pable, come to receive instruction from  
 the Disciples, who were sent forth into  
 the World for that very End. The *other*  
 Reason of our Saviour's making so great a  
 difference between his Disciples and the  
 Multitude, in explaining all things dis-  
 tinctly to the one, and speaking to the  
 other in Parables without the interpreta-  
 tion; was the unworthiness and incapa-  
 city, at present, of the greater part of the  
 mixt multitude, to hear and judge of his  
 Doctrine. This Reason we find our Sa-  
 viour giving, in the words a little before  
 the Text; where, upon his Disciples ask-  
 ing him the meaning of the Parable, he  
 introduces his explication with these  
 words, ver. 10; *Unto you it is given to  
 know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God;  
 but to others in parables; that seeing they  
 might not see, and hearing they might not*

S E R M. *understand.* Which words at first Sight,  
 IV. may seem to ascribe the cause of this different treatment, not to the different Qualifications of the Persons, but merely to the absolute Will of God, whose pleasure it was to have it so; Which would be very difficult to reconcile with the Attributes of God, who declares himself to be no respecter of persons. But in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of *St Matthew*, where the same History is again related, we find the same words set down more at large, and explained so, as clearly to lay the blame upon the Persons themselves, and not upon any unwillingness in God to assist them: ver. 10; *The Disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto Them in parables? He answered, and said unto them, Because it is given unto You to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to Them it is not given: For, whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even That he hath: Therefore speak I to Them in parables, because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand:*

*derstand*: That is, to the Disciples who attended to, and considered, and were desirous to practise his Doctrine, he continually explained things more and more; *to you that hear, shall more be given*, as St Mark expresses it; but the careless and prejudiced multitude, were neither worthy nor capable of such instruction; And then he adds, ver. 14; *And in Them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; For this peoples heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* In this larger and fuller account of the words, given by St Matthew, the defect appears plainly to be only in the people themselves: God, is always ready to heal them upon their Conversion; but they themselves are careless, and desire not to be converted; and the Prophecy is not a declaration of what God chooses to do on *his* part, but a Com-



S E R M. IV.  complaint of the peoples carelessness, incapacity, and unworthiness *to receive our Lord's instruction*. And in this Sense we find St Paul expressly interpreting the same Prophetical words, *Acts xxviii. 25*; when, upon the *Jews* neglecting and obstinately refusing to attend his preaching of the Gospel at *Rome*; after much patience, he at length left them, with this protestation; *Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet, unto our Fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive*. So that our Saviour's forbearing to explain the Parable to the multitude, must by no means be understood as proceeding from any unwillingness in *Him* to give them all necessary instruction; but it was plainly only his putting in Practice that Rule himself, which he afterwards gave in direction to his Disciples, that they should not *cast their Pearls before Swine*, that is, before prejudiced and unworthy persons; lest thereby they should expose *Themselves* to injuries, and their *Doctrine* to contempt. 'Tis the very same case, as in the instance



of his forbearing to work Miracles in his own Country; Not that he was more unwilling to convert those of his own Country than others; but because the unreasonable Prejudices and Obstinacy of those particular persons, made *Them* unworthy, and would have rendred the *Miracles themselves* uselefs. This seems to be the true account of our Saviour's forbearing to interpret the Parable to the Multitude; and it shows how dangerous a thing it is, to raise Doctrines from particular and single Texts of Scripture, without comparing them with other parallel places, which more fully represent the same sense under different Expressions.

THE Parable itself, of which the Text is part of the Explication, is a lively description of the nature and manner of the Preaching of the Gospel, and of the different Effects that the Doctrine of Christ has upon different Persons, according to their different Tempers, Dispositions, and Qualifications. God sent his Son into the World, to the intent that All men through him might be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth: Accordingly  
our

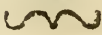
S E R M.  
IV.  


S E R M. our Saviour sent forth his Disciples with  
 IV. an universal Commission, *Go ye into all the earth, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* This is represented by a Sower's going forth to sow his seed, and scattering it in *variety* of Places. (The Similitude is suited to the Capacity of the vulgar, and agreeable to the usual method of instruction in the *Jewish* Nation; that those among the multitude, who were well-disposed, might consider and enquire and be informed in the Doctrine by degrees; at the same time that the careless and unattentive, remained wholly ignorant; and they who were prejudiced and designed to cavil, might have no handle to do it.) Now, according to the intent of the Parable; Among Them who hear the preaching of the Gospel, there is great diversity; and the Effect it has upon them, according to their different tempers, is likewise very different. Some hear or read the Gospel with so little regard and attention, that it makes no impression at all upon their minds, but they immediately forget it; and though their own Vices be particularly described, and the danger  
 of

of them shown, yet they never make the application to themselves, but, as St James expresse it, ch. i. ver. 23, *are like unto a Man beholding his natural Face in a glass, who beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was*: These persons our Saviour compares to the way-side, the beaten road, into which the Seed that fell upon it never entred at all, but was either trodden under feet and destroyed by them that passed over it, or else was picked up by the Birds of the Air. Others, when they hear the Gospel preached, are indeed at first moved by it with some warmth of devotion, and embrace it chearfully; but, having no wise and settled resolutions, no firmness and constancy of Mind; upon the first Difficulties and Temptations that assault them, they very quickly fall away: These our Saviour describes under the notion of stony or rocky ground, where the Earth being very thin, and shallow, the Seed that fell into it soon sprung up indeed, but, for want of moisture and depth to take root, as soon as the Sun shined hot, it wither-<sup>Eze. xxxiii 31.</sup>

S E R M. withered away. Others, when the Gospel is preached to them, are convinced of the Truth and Reasonableness of the Doctrine, and, as often as they are exhorted to it, make some slight resolutions of obeying and living up to it: But the perpetually returning Cares and Business, the Covetousness, the Ambition and the Pleasures of the World, do so wholly take up their Thoughts and Attention, that they make no effectual improvement in the practice of Religion, and it has little or no real influence upon their Lives and Conversations: These our Saviour compares to Ground which brought forth Corn indeed, but together with it such a Number of Thorns and Weeds, as quickly over-ran and choaked it, so that it never came to any Perfection. These are the several ways, of which our Saviour warns us in this Parable, by which they who hear the constant preaching of the Gospel, may yet be guilty of a final miscarriage; through Carelessness, and Inattention; through want of Constancy, and good Resolution; through the Cares and Covetousness and Pleasures of the World:

So

So that there was great reason for the cau- S E R M.  
tion he gives his Disciples at the Con- IV.  
clusion of his Discourse upon this Subject,   
ver. 18 ; *Take heed how ye hear.* Lastly ;  
Others there are, who, being of a truly  
good and virtuous disposition, willingly  
and cheerfully embrace the Word of God,  
believe it heartily, adhere to it steadily,  
obey it sincerely, and show forth the ef-  
fects of it in the constant practice and  
persevering course of a good Life : And  
These our Saviour in the Text compares  
to *good ground*, which brought forth much  
fruit ; *That on the good ground, saith he,*  
*are they, which in an honest and good heart,*  
*having heard the word, keep it, and bring*  
*forth fruit with Patience.*

THE general intent and meaning of  
the Parable being thus explained ; the  
Words themselves offer to us the following  
things, worthy our particular Observa-  
tion.

I. *First* ; T H A T the first and principal  
thing required, to qualify a man and  
make him meet for the Kingdom of God,  
is an *honest and good heart*, a true and right  
Disposition, an upright and sincere inten-  
tion :

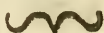
S E R M. tion : *That on the good ground, are they,*  
 IV. *which in an honest and good Heart.* Our

~~~~~  
 Saviour was sent as a Light into the World, to recover men out of the Darkneſs and Slavery of Sin, into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God : But, as the Brightneſs of the *Sun* itſelf diſcovers no Objects to Them, who have no Organs of Seeing to diſcern its Light ; ſo the Doctrine of the Goſpel has no effect, no influence upon Thoſe, whoſe hearts are not honeſt and ſincere, to entertain it in the Love thereof. God is not obliged to enlighten ſuch, as are wilfully blind ; and which reſuſe to ſearch after and diſcern the Truth, becauſe they *have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs* : But they who are deſirous to *do his Will*, ſhall know and underſtand it ; and be enabled to praſtiſe it acceptably. There is in the temper and diſpoſition of ſuch perſons, a likeneſs and congruity, with the everlaſting Law of Righteouſneſs ; The Nature and Commands of God, the Divine Life both in Heaven and in Earth, are agreeable to them ; and the Doctrine of the Goſpel is embraced by them with Complacency, as
 Truth

Truth is received by Children who have never been prejudiced thro' ill Habits, and as good Seed springs up and flourishes immediately, in its natural and proper Soil. This honest and good heart, this Innocency and Simplicity of Mind, this freedom from Malice, from evil and corrupt designs; is the disposition which our Saviour requires, and which he esteems so highly, when in the parallel place to the Text, upon the occasion of young Children being brought unto him, he declares that *of such is the Kingdom of God*. 'Tis the temper of *Nathanael*, that *Israelite* indeed, of whom our Saviour bore this Testimony, even *before* his acknowledging *Him* to be the *Messias*, that there was *no guile in him*. 'Tis the disposition of the *Bereans*; who, when Christ was preached to them by the Apostles, to be He of whom all the Prophets witnessed; immediately *they searched the Scriptures*, the Writings of the *Old Testament*, *daily*; to see *whether those things were so*, or not. 'Tis the temper of *Zachæus*, who, upon our Saviour's preaching Repentance unto Life; without delay declared, because his

Profession

S E R M. Profession had been such as in all probability had exposed him to many Temptations of Extortion, that *the half of his goods he gave to the poor, and, if he had wronged any man, he restored him four-fold.* In a word, 'tis that preparation of heart, with which St *Peter's* Auditors came, when by the strength and evidence of his Discourse, there was in one day added to the Church about three thousand Souls: concerning whom it is said, *Acts* ii. 47, that *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved*: The original word does not signify *such as should be saved*, but *such as are or were saved*; that is, *such as were disposed*, (as the Apostle in the same place expresses it,) to *save themselves from that untoward generation*; *such as were ready in Order* (τεταγμένοι) (as the like persons are elsewhere described) to receive the Doctrine of eternal Life. All which, with other the like Expressions, must not be understood to signify, as if such persons were already actually indued with *all* Christian Virtues and Graces; (For these indeed are not the preparations *for*, but the Fruits and Effects



fects of the Spirit;) but they signify only the general capacity or aptness, a willingness or suitableness of Disposition, to attain and improve them. Which Disposition, under the disadvantages of ignorance and want of Instruction, of prejudice and error, and of variety of Temptations without suitable assistances to overcome them; may easily lie hid, and not discover itself; nay, may sometimes seem to be extinguished in great measure, by contrary Practices; But, upon due instruction and reasonable conviction, it will not fail to appear and exert itself. Thus *St Paul* himself was once not only an Unbeliever, but a Persecutor also of the Church of God; But yet even *Then* there was a sincerity in him, which made him act zealously, though in a wrong way; and afterwards he easily found mercy, because he had done it ignorantly in Unbelief. The best and most innocent Understanding may, for want of due Instruction, be led astray with prejudices; but it will not become obstinate and incorrigible: The best and most fruitful Soil, while it continues uncultivated, may *not*

S E R M. *only* bring forth no good fruit, but more-
 IV. over be over-run with weeds and thorns;
 yet being capable of amendment and just
 improvement, it will not fail, upon due
 cultivation, to discover its fruitfulness.
The earth, as St Paul expresses it, *which*
drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon
it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them
by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing
from God: But that which (after this,
 still) *beareth thorns and briers, is rejected,*
and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is
to be burned; Heb. vi. 7: The con-
 trary temper, is That of those, who after
 all reasonable means of conviction, still
 continue incorrigible and unreformed;
 these have no principle of sincerity and
 upright intention in them, by which they
 may be recovered and saved; (these are
 none of the Sheep of Christ;) but their
 End must be, unavoidable Destruction.

THE Application therefore of This
 Observation, is to All who profess the Re-
 ligion of Christ. If no man, without an
 upright and sincere intention, can worthi-
 ly receive the Doctrine of Christ, or is
 capable of becoming a true member of
 his

his *Kingdom on Earth*; What hope is there S E R M.
IV.
for such, who *already* profess to have entertained his Doctrine and to be his Disciples, that they shall be judged worthy to be admitted into his *Kingdom in Heaven*; if, notwithstanding this Profession, they still continue to act with a dishonest and unsincere Heart? If in the *Progress* of a Christian life, they still want that first and most necessary Qualification, without which they could not worthily *begin* it, nor be duly prepared for so much as the *Admission or Entrance* into so excellent a State, into the Profession of so holy a Religion? If, instead of renouncing the Vanities and Temptations of the World, for the advantage and improvement of Religion; they on the contrary make Religion only subordinate, to the Interests and Pleasures of the World? Surely the Hope of such Persons, is, as *Job* elegantly expresses it, like to a *Spider's Web*; and the joy of the hypocrite, is but for a moment.

II. *Secondly*; THE *second* thing remarkable in the Words, is the Supposition they contain, that 'tis not sufficient that a man

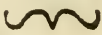
S E R M. be of a good disposition in *general*, but
 IV. 'tis moreover necessary in *particular*, that
 he hear and entertain the Doctrine of
 Christ: *That on the good ground, are they,*
which in an honest and good Heart, having
heard the Word. It is not sufficient that
 the Soil be good, but it must also be sown
 with good Seed: It is not sufficient that
 the Eye is made capable of discerning
 the Light, if God had not created *light*
 in the World, to dispel that Darkness,
 which at the Chaos sat on the Face
 of the Deep. Christ is the true
 Light, that is come into the World; and
 every one that will not walk in darkness,
 is indispensably obliged to receive His
 doctrine. Mere Dispositions, Faculties,
 and Capacities without improvement, may
 possibly be very ineffectual; as is evident
 from the extreme ignorance of some
 whole Nations, even at this day. But
 Learning and Instruction civilizes and cul-
 tivates mens nature, raising it from sa-
 vage to humane; and true religion im-
 proves it still farther, and exalts it to di-
 vine. Now there is no religion in the
 World,

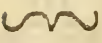
World, but the *Christian* only, that is at S E R M.
all able to furnish men with instructions IV.

sufficiently clear, with motives sufficiently weighty, with assistances sufficiently powerful, to overcome the Temptations of this present World; For, *who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* and *This only is the victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith,* 1 Joh. v. 4; *Our Faith*, that is, our firm and stedfast belief and assurance, of the Pardon of past Sins through the merits of Christ, of the divine assistance for the future, of a resurrection from the dead, of a judgment to come, and of an eternal State of rewards or punishments hereafter. Nothing less than this, can effectually enable men to overcome the World: Except a man embrace therefore *This Faith, except he be born again of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; Neither is there any other Name given under Heaven, by which we must be saved.* All that has been said upon This Head, must by no means be applied to any of those, to whom the Gospel was either never

S E R M. ver preached, or never faithfully and reasonably represented. For to whom *little* is given, of Them will not be *much* required: To such Persons, God will either in his own good time cause the words to be preached, *by which they and their houses shall be saved*; as he did to *Cornelius*, that sincerely pious and devout Centurion; or else he will finally judge them by other measures: For *the Judge of all the Earth will do what is right*, and with Equity shall he judge the Nations. But all such, to whom the Light of the Gospel has been manifested, are indispensably obliged to *walk by that Light*; and modern Unbelievers in Christian Nations act very unworthily, when they obstinately oppose that revealed Religion, from whence alone they have borrowed even the *Philosophy* they pretend to. For, (as is evident from the extreme ignorance of the whole Heathen World) 'tis from the *Christian Doctrine* only, that Unbelievers have Now borrowed all that knowledge, by which they would endeavour to set up mere nature (or rather absolute Scepticism) in opposition to Christ's Religion.

III. *Thirdly*;

III. *Thirdly*; THE next thing observable S E R M.
in the Words of the Text, is, that 'tis IV.
not sufficient that men hear and receive 
the Doctrine of Christ, but they must also
keep or retain it; Who in an *honest and*
good heart, having heard the word, keep
it: It must not be like Seed scattered
loose upon the Earth, which the Birds of
the Air pick up, or Passengers tread un-
der foot, or the first shower of rain
washes away; but it must be like that,
which entrencheth into the Earth, and abides
in it, and grows, and takes root therein.
It must be understood, and remembred,
and frequently meditated upon: The
Principles of Religion must be thorough-
ly imbibed by a man, and fixt in him,
and make deep and lasting impressions up-
on his Mind: They must be converted,
as it were, into the *Food and Nourishment*
of his Soul; and become, its very Habit
and Temper: They must be in him *Ac-*
tive and Ruling Principles, the first springs
of all his Motions, and the continual
guides and directors of all the Actions of
his Life. This is what St *John* expresses
by the Seed *remaining* in him, 1 *Job*. iii. 9;


S E R M. *Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit*
 IV. *Sin; for his Seed remaineth in him; and*
 *he cannot Sin, becauſe he is born of God.*
 St Matthew, in the parallel place, in the explication of the ſame Parable, expreſſes it by hearing and *underſtanding* the Word, St Matthew xiii. 23; i. e. meditating upon it and ſtudying it, ſo as to make it a principle of Life and Action; For ſo in Scripture-phraſe, it is always to be lookt upon as a general Rule of interpretation; that the *Fear of the Lord, That only is Wiſdom*; and to depart from evil, *That only is acknowledged to be Underſtanding*; And otherwiſe, he is That *fooliſh* perſon, whom our Saviour deſcribes as building his houſe upon the Sand. For ſo, in Scripture-phraſe, not Ignorant *Perſons only* and Infidels, are ſtiled Fools and Unbelievers; but *Fools*, in Scripture-expreſſion, more commonly ſignifies, ſuch perſons as *act not* according to what they *know*; and *Unbelievers*, ſuch as *practiſe not* what they profeſs to believe.

IV. *Fourthly*; THEREFORE, Our Saviour adds further, that Thoſe whom he compares to good ground, muſt, if they will
 juſtify

justify that Character, make evidence of S E R M.
 it finally by their *bringing forth Fruit*: IV.
Who having heard the Word, keep it, and
bring forth Fruit. This is the only cer-
 tain and infallible Mark, of the Truth
 and Sincerity of all that is supposed to
 have gone before; the only substantial
 evidence, of their having an honest, and
 good Heart; of their embracing, and be-
 lieving the Word; of their keeping, and
 having meditated upon it. All *other* Signs
 and Proofs may fail; all *other* marks and
 characters whatsoever of a good Christian,
 may prove erroneous and deceitful, not
 only to others, but very possibly in great
 measure even to a man's self also; except
This only, of his *bringing forth the Fruits*
of the Spirit; that is, living in the Ha-
 bitual Practice of all Christian Virtues;
 which St Paul calls walking *worthy* of
God who has called us, and *worthy* of the
vocation wherewith we are called. And
This is an evidence, which can never
 fail; For the *Effect* must always of ne-
 cessity be proportionable, to the nature
 and operations of the *Cause* that produ-
 ced it; and there can be no mistake in
 judging

S E R M. judging of the goodness of a Cause, from
 IV. the excellency of its proper and immediate *Effects*. *A corrupt Tree, cannot bring forth good fruit; neither do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles;* St Matt. vii. 16. So that the Rule our Saviour gives for the tryal of true and false *Prophets*, holds still more evidently in judging of good and bad *Christians*, and especially in the judgment men are to pass upon *Themselves* and concerning their own estate; *By their Fruits* they may know it: And St *John's* determination is liable to no evasion or misinterpretation, 1 *Joh.* iii. 10; *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil; Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother.*

V. *Fifthly*; 'Tis observable that our Saviour concludes his Character of a good Christian, with the addition of *Patience*, as a Qualification necessary to be joined with all those hitherto mentioned: *Having heard the word, they keep it, and bring forth fruit with Patience*: i. e. As Corn sown, if it be ever likely to come

to any Perfection, must take such deep S E R M.
and firm root in the Earth, as not to be IV.
scorched by Heat, nor withered by Cold, 
nor washed away with floods, nor choaked
and over-run with Weeds; so a good
Christian must be armed with *Patience*,
to resist the assaults of Persecution, the
Temptations of the World, the Entice-
ments of bad Company, the Allurements
of Pleasure and Profit, and the perpetual
Treachery of his own corrupt Affections
and inordinate Passions; 'till at length he
obtains a title to that Promise of our Sa-
viour, that he *shall be saved* because he
has *endured unto the End*. *To them who*
by patient continuance in well-doing, seek
for glory, and honour, and immortality;
eternal life.

Lastly, and to conclude; 'Tis worthy
of remark, that St *Matthew*, in the pa-
rallel place of his Gospel, adds to the
Words of the Text, that of Those who
kept the Word, and bore Fruit with pa-
tience, *some brought forth an hundred-fold,*
some sixty, and some thirty. And this de-
notes to us these two things. 1st, that
those who embrace and obey the Gospel
in

S E R M. in sincerity according to their Power,
 IV. though they have not the Capacity and
 Ability of doing actually so much good in
 the World, as others have; yet shall be
 accepted according to the Integrity and
 Sincerity of their Intention: Thus the
 Servant who gained two Talents, was as
 certainly admitted into his Master's joy,
 tho' not into the same Proportion of it,
 as he who had gained ten; and St Paul
 argues, that *in a great house, there are not
 only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of
 wood and of earth; and some to honour, and
 some to dishonour; by dishonour, meaning,
 not uselessness and being wholly rejected, (as
 some understand it,) but only a less Degree
 of value and esteem, (as the nature and de-
 sign of his similitude plainly requires.)*
 Which tho' they be indeed *within* the
 house, and not wholly excluded; yet no
 man who has a worthy Sense of religion,
 can long content himself with being of
 that number, without desiring any fur-
 ther improvement. For 2dly, This dis-
 tinction of *some bringing forth an hundred-
 fold, some sixty, and some thirty, as on the
 one hand 'tis an encouragement to the*

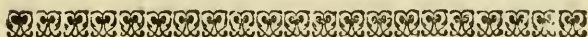
meanest Persons, who are sincerely religious; so on the other hand it points out a very great advantage, which God has put into the Hands of *Those of greater Abilities*. Power and Authority, Honour and Dignity, Riches and Interest, are so many *Talents* committed to mens charge; which if they make use of to the Glory of God and the publick Good of Mankind, they thereby entitle themselves to a proportionably greater and more illustrious Reward; For *they that are wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; but they that turn many to righteousness, (by great Example or Power, or any other commendable means,) shall shine with a yet brighter glory as the stars for ever and ever.*

S E R M.
IV.




S E R M O N V.

The End and Design of the
Jewish Law.




GAL. ii. 15, 16.

We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.



HERE is nothing has given S E R M.
greater occasion to false opini- V.
ons, and unreasonable disputes
in Religion; than the picking
out single Texts of Scripture, and inter-
preting

S E R M. V.  preting them according to the first *sound* of the words, without considering the coherence and connection of the whole Discourse. Thus, *e. g.* if we search on one hand into the Ground of many of those mens Assertions, who love to aggravate the *corruption of humane nature*, and the *natural misery of mankind*; we shall find the true foundation of them, to be the applying those places of Scripture to the *whole bulk* of mankind, which are evidently and expressly spoken only of some of the *worst of men*: On the other hand the reason why others have so magnified the *natural faculties of men*, as that they have been thought to *diminish* and *detract from the grace of God*; is because they have applied those Texts to the *generality of men*, which are spoken only of the *most perfect Christians*. Again; the foundation of those mens opinion, who have extolled some *one* particular virtue in opposition to, or as an equivalent for, *all other* duties; is their having interpreted such places of Scripture concerning some *one* particular virtue, as are plainly meant of the *whole* Christian Religion: And the reason why
others


others have thought *no* moral Virtues at S E R M.
all, necessary to be practised by Believers; V.
is because they have applied those Texts
to the most *essential* and *fundamental* Du-
ties of the *Christian* Religion, which were
intended only of the *Ceremonial* perform-
ances of the *Jewish* Law. Whoever there-
fore will so read and understand the Holy
Scriptures, as from thence to determine
truly what is necessary to be believed, and
practised by Christians; must not only
from single Texts, and those interpreted at
pleasure, frame to himself or receive from
Authority of Others, a Scheme of Reli-
gion; (for then there will be as many
different Systems, as the fancies and pre-
judices of Men or different Bodies of
Men are different;) but he must consider
the nature and design of the several parts
of the whole Revelation; he must con-
sider the proper Signification of those terms
and expressions, which were in use at the
time when the Books of Scripture were
written; and above all, he must attend
to the coherence and connexion of the
Author's Discourse, the occasion of his
writing, and the true Scope and Intent of

S E R M. each passage, from whence he would deduce any Doctrine of Faith, or Rule of Practice. The *Gospels*, are a brief History of the Life of our Blessed Saviour; and contain in them, *1st*, the Terms of Conditions, upon which those who would *become* Subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, are to be admitted into that State; and *2dly*, the general Laws or Rules, to which those who do *already* profess themselves Christians, must conform their Lives. The Terms or Conditions, upon which men are to *become* Subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, are declared by *John the Baptist* and by our Saviour himself at his first Preaching, to be Faith and Repentance. The General Laws or Rules of Obedience, by which those who are *already* Subjects of his Kingdom, must govern their Lives; are delivered directly and principally in our Saviour's *Sermon upon the Mount*; but occasionally also urged in his *other* Discourses, and most lively expressed in the example of his Life: The Sermon upon the Mount, contains a particular Explication of the ten Commandments, which are the moral and eternal Law of God,

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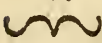
explain-

explaining the Duty and Obedience we S E R M.
owe to God, and the Love and Charity V.
we must perform to men; It contains
also a *Vindication* of That Law, from the
false and corrupt Glosses of the Jewish
Doctors; and Exhortations to a more ex-
alted, spiritual, and perfect manner of
performing those Duties, than was before
insisted on even by the *true* intent of the
Law. The *Parables* and occasional Dis-
courses of our Saviour, are chiefly to ex-
plain the *nature*, and set forth the true
design of the Gospel; which for the most
part in those Discourses is called the
Kingdom of Heaven, to express the great-
ness and excellency of that Dispensation.
And *lastly*, the History of his *Life*, is a
most compleat pattern of *all Christian*
Virtues, proposed plainly and familiarly
to our Imitation: but more especially 'tis
an example of *patience* under afflictions,
of *resignation* to the will of God in all
conditions, and of *contempt* of the world.
Thus the Gospels contain a plain System
of Christian Religion in general, enforced
both by precept and example; and are
therefore profitable to instruct us in all

S E R M. Righteousness, and to furnish us tho-
 V. roughly unto all good Works. The *Acts*
 of the Holy Apostles, contain the History of the Apostles Preaching and Doctrine, which was the same with what their Master had before taught, namely, Repentance and Obedience; together with an account of the Success of this their Ministry, and of the State of the Infant-Churches in those purest times, immediately after their being founded by the Apostles. The *Epistles* contain either *general* Exhortations to *all* Christians, in order to confirm and strengthen them in the Faith; or *particular* and *occasional* Discourses to *single* Churches, upon particular Controversies or Matters of Dispute. Those which contain *general* Exhortations to all Christians, are easy to be understood by all, who read them with a sincere Desire to be instructed in their Duty, or confirmed in their Faith: Those which are written upon *particular* questions of dispute, cannot be rightly understood, without first understanding the *matter* of those Disputes, and the *occasions* upon which the Epistles were written.

ten. Of this latter sort are many of St S E R M. Paul's Epistles, and especially This to the V. *Galatians*, and That to the *Romans*. Which because they relate almost wholly to a Controversy, that arose upon the very first planting of Christianity; they have in later times, for want of attending to the true occasion of their being written, been much misinterpreted, and by many wrested to their own destruction. And no Explication of *particular* Passages, can be of so much importance towards stating the Apostles true Sense, as giving in the first place a distinct View of the *general* Design of his *whole* Writings. In order therefore to the clearer understanding the true Design of these Epistles, it is to be observed, that before the coming of Christ, the *Jews* were the peculiar People of God, selected out of all the Nations of the earth to be the Standard of true Religion, the People among whom God would choose to place his Name, and over whom should continually watch the peculiar care of the divine Providence: To them were committed the oracles of God, Rom. iii. 2; to them pertained the

The End and Design

S E R M. *adoption, and the glory, and the covenants*
 V. *and the giving of the law, and the service*
 *of God, and the promises; Whose are the*
fathers, and of whom as concerning the
flesh Christ came, who is over all God
blessed for ever; Rom. ix. 4, 5. To them
were committed the oracles of God; i. e.
with them were intrusted all the Revela-
tions of the Will of God, the Law and
the Prophecies, as the people with whom
God thought fit to deposit these things
for the benefit of the World; to them
they were committed as a light or stan-
dard to which all Nations might flow,
and in fact we find that Profelytes from
all Nations attracted by the splendour of
those great and mighty actions which
God wrought for and among this people,
did come in and embrace their Religion:
To them pertained the adoption, i. e. they
were honoured with the peculiar privi-
lege of being accounted as the Sons or
People of God, and of being accordingly
under the more peculiar care and protec-
tion of his providence. When the most
high divided to the nations their inheri-
tance, when he separated the Sons of Adam,
he

he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel; for the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance; Deut. xxxii. 9; i. e. God so divided and settled the nations of the earth, as to have the people of the Jews in a more particular manner under his own immediate Care and Protection; for the Lord has chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure; Psal. cxxxv. 4. To them pertained the glory; i. e. among them was the ark and temple of God, the (Shecinah or) glorious presence of the divine Majesty; In Judah was God known, his name was great in Israel; In Salem also was his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Sion; Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2. To them pertained the covenants, i. e. with them God entered solemnly into covenant, that he would be their God and they should be his people; and confirmed this covenant with the sacramental seal of circumcision, and sprinkling of blood. To them pertained the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; i. e. their manner of worship was such as was prescribed them in a wonderful and

S E R M. miraculous manner by God himself; and
 V. their polity also was of divine Institution
 and Appointment: *God shewed his word
 unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments
 unto Israel; He hath not dealt so with
 any other nation, neither have the heathen
 knowledge of his laws; Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20:*
 To *them* was the law given, written on
 tables of stone with God's own hand, and
 to *them* were the prophets always sent with
 inspired instructions. Inspired by the Spi-
 rit of God to instruct them occasionally
 in their duty, to warn them of impending
 Judgments, and to exhort them to pre-
 vent those Judgments falling upon them,
 by a timely repentance; and to *them* par-
 ticularly belonged all the promises contain-
 ed in the law and in the prophets. Lastly,
*Theirs were the fathers, and of them ac-
 cording to the flesh Christ came, who is over
 all God blessed for ever; i. e.* They were
 the posterity of those Patriarchs, to whom
 God had so often promised and sworn
 by himself, *that in their seed should all the
 nations of the earth be blessed;* and among
 them was born that *Messias*, of whom so
 great things had been prophesied and who
 was therefore *the expectation of all the ends of*
the

the earth. These great and glorious pri-
 vileges, the later *Jews* did not make a
 right use of with Humility and Thank-
 fulness, but valued themselves too highly,
 and despised all other Nations as Aliens
 from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, Stran-
 gers to the covenant of promise, and scarce
 worthy of the protection of the divine
 Providence. The establishment of their
 law and ceremonies they imagined to be
 designed of God to continue for ever;
 and the promises contained in the law and
 the prophets they thought belong'd so pe-
 culiarly to themselves, that they would
 not believe any other people should ever
 be allowed to be partakers of them.
 When the Messiah himself should appear,
 they were perswaded that he was to e-
 stablish an everlasting Kingdom over the
Jewish nation only, and so become indeed
 the wonder and amazement, but not the
 Salvation of the *Gentiles*. This error of
 theirs, prevailed long even among our
 Saviour's Disciples themselves, and began
 then first to be reprov'd and oppos'd,
 when St *Peter*, having an express com-
 mand from Heaven *not to count any man*
common

S E R M.
 V.


S E R M. common or unclean, Acts x. 28; *went and*
 V. *preached the Gospel to Cornelius the centu-*
rion; being convinced that God was of a
truth no respecter of persons, but that he
had unto the Gentiles also granted repent-
ance unto life; and that in every nation
he that feareth God and worketh righte-
ousness is accepted of him. Upon This the
 converted Jews, who had not yet laid
 aside their ancient prejudices, contended
 earnestly for the necessity of continuing
 to observe the ceremonial Law; *teaching*
the brethren every where, and saying, ex-
cept ye be circumcised after the manner of
Moses, ye cannot be saved; Acts xv. 1.
 Against whom, the Apostles, assembled on
 purpose in a Council at Jerusalem, made
 a solemn determination; as is at large re-
 lated, Acts xv: and accordingly we find
 St Paul, (as being the Apostle to whom
 was particularly committed the preaching
 of the Gospel to the Gentiles) in all his
 Writings earnestly exhorting his Gentile
 Converts not to look upon themselves as
 bound to observe the law of Moses, but
 on the contrary *to stand fast in that liberty-*
wherewith Christ had made them free.

This

This is the true State of that controversy, SERM.
V.
which at the time when this Epistle to

the *Galatians*, and that to the *Romans*, were written; was the chief and almost only considerable Subject of dispute in the Christian Church. Now that there are abundance of passages in these Epistles, which so plainly relate to this Controversy, that they cannot possibly be interpreted to any other sense, is very evident. A great part of the Epistle to the *Romans* is in express Words about the casting off the *Jews*, and the coming in of the *Gentiles*; particularly the ixth, xth, and xith Chapters; and the xivth Chapter is wholly imployed in shewing the unnecessariness of the *Jewish* observation of days, and distinction of meats; *One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike*, ver. 5; and *I know and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it self, but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean*; ver. 14. In the Epistle to the *Galatians*, the same Apostle warns his Gentile converts against such as would perswade them to Judaize;

They

SERM.

V.

They constrain you, saith he, to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; For neither do they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh; ch. vi. ver. 12, 13: He assures them that in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avail-eth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, ch. vi. ver. 15: He exhorts them earnestly, to stand fast in their Christian liberty, and not to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage: He tells them also how he openly rebuked St Peter at Antioch, for withdrawing and separating himself from the Gentiles, for fear of them which were of the circumcision; ch. ii. 12. All which, and many other the like passages, referring so evidently and expressly to the fore-mentioned controversy, whether it was necessary or not for the new Converts to keep the Mosaic law; are a certain guide to direct us in interpreting the other parts of these Epistles. This therefore being premised in general, we may proceed to observe more particularly; that the Apostle designing on one hand

hand to magnify the Gospel by setting S E R M.
forth its sufficiency to Salvation, and on V.
the other hand to demonstrate the insufficiency and unnecessariness of the ceremonial Observances of the Jewish Law; does all along make use of such terms to express the Christian and Jewish Religion by, as may best serve to set forth the excellency of the one, and diminish the opinion which men had taken up of the necessity of the other. And

1st; BECAUSE the first and most fundamental duty of the Gospel, is believing in God, and believing that most perfect Revelation of his Will, which he has made to mankind by our Saviour Jesus Christ; whereas on the contrary the principal part of that Religion which the Judaizing Christians so earnestly contended for, was an anxious observance of the burdensome rites of the ceremonial Law; therefore the Apostle calls the Christian Religion *Faith*, and the Jewish Religion *the Law*. Rom. iii. 28; *Therefore we conclude, saith he, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*; His meaning is, It clearly appears from what he

S E R M. he had already argued, that obedience to
 V. the Christian Religion elsewhere called the
 obedience of Faith, is sufficient to justify
 a man, without observing the ceremonies
 of the *Jewish* Law: And ver. 31. *Do we
 then make void the law through faith?
 God forbid: yea, we establish the law; i. e.*
 Do we then, as some men object, by our
 preaching up the Christian Religion disan-
 nul and make void the law of God or
 that revelation of his will which he
 made to the *Jews*? No, we are so far
 from that, that by introducing Christi-
 anity we establish, confirm, and per-
 fect the moral and immutable part of
 the law much more effectually, than
 the *Jewish* ceremonies were able to do:
 Thus likewise in the epistle to the *Gala-*
tians, ch. iii. ver. 2; *This only would I*
learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by
the works of the law, or by the hearing of
faith? Or as 'tis expressed, ver. 5; *He*
that ministreth to you the Spirit, and
worketh miracles among you, doth he it by
the works of the law or by the hearing of
faith? I appeal unto you yourselves, who
 contend so earnestly for the necessity of
 keeping

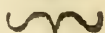


keeping up the *Jewish* ceremonies, was it by your observing the rites of the *Jewish* religion *that ye received the gifts of the Holy Ghost*, or by your being converted to the Christian? So also, *Gal. iii. 24; The Law, saith he, was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; i. e. the Jewish dispensation was appointed by God in condescension to the weakness of that people, to fit them by degrees for the reception of the Gospel. And ch. ii. ver. 15; the Apostle, having rebuked St Peter openly for withdrawing himself from the Gentiles at Antioch, he adds, in the words of the Text, We who are Jews by nature and not Sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; i. e. if we our selves, saith he, who were born and educated in the Jewish Religion, being convinced that that Religion was not able to justify us in the Sight of God, have thought it necessary to imbrace the Gospel of Christ, in hopes*

S E R M. hopes to be justified thereby; how much
 V. less reason have you to compel the *Gentiles*,
 who were never brought up at all in the
Jewish Religion, to begin to conform
 themselves to the manners of the *Jews*,
 after their conversion to Christianity?

2dly, BECAUSE the Christian religion
 teaches us to expect salvation not from our
 own merits, but from the grace of God,
 that is, according to the terms of that new
 and gracious Covenant wherein God has
 promised to accept of sincere Repentance
 and Amendment, instead of perfect un-
 sinning Obedience; whereas on the con-
 trary the *Jews* depended upon their exact
 performance of the works of the law;
 therefore the Apostle calls the Christian
 religion *Grace*, and the *Jewish* he stiles
Works; Rom. xi. 5, 6; So then at this
present time also there is a remnant accord-
ing to the election of Grace; i. e. though
 the nation of the *Jews*, having rejected
 the gracious offer of the Gospel, are there-
 upon rejected from being the people of
 God, yet hath God reserved to himself a
 remnant from among them, even those
 who have embraced this grace of God,
 which

which is the Gospel of Christ. *And if it be by Grace*, says he, *then is it no more of works*; that is, if it be upon account of their having embraced the Christian Religion, that they are reckoned the peculiar people of God, then is not this privilege any longer annexed to the professors of the Jewish religion; *Otherwise grace is no more grace*; i. e. otherwise the Christian Religion is in vain, and not what it pretends to be, the grace of God. Thus also, ch. vi. ver. 14; *Sin shall not have the dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace*; i. e. ye are not under the Jewish Religion, but under the Christian. So likewise in the Epistle to the Galatians, ch. v. ver. 4; *Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*; i. e. whosoever will needs retain the Jewish Religion, he takes upon him to fulfil the whole law; forsaking the gracious dispensation of the Christian Religion, and therefore Christ shall be of no effect unto him. Again,

S E R M.
V.


S E R M. 3dly, BECAUSE the duties of the Christian Religion are almost wholly moral and
 V. Spiritual, respecting the inward disposition
 of the heart and mind; whereas on the contrary the ceremonies of the *Jewish* law were for the most part external; and, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* stiles them, carnal ordinances, respecting chiefly the outward purification of the body; therefore the Apostle calls the Christian Religion *Spirit*, and the *Jewish* he stiles *Flesh*. Thus in the Epistle to the *Romans*, ch. viii. ver. 3, 4; *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the Flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the flesh, That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; i. e.* Whereas the *Jewish* Religion, because of its outward and carnal ordinances was weak and insufficient to make men truly righteous, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to offer up himself a sacrifice for the Sins of mankind, established the Christian Religion, which purifying throughly the whole heart and
 I mind,

mind, and purging the conscience from dead works, might through the grace and mercy of God avail to justify men from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law. Thus also in the Epistle to the *Galatians* iii. 3; *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? i. e.* Are ye so weak as to think, that after ye have embraced the Gospel of Christ, ye can become yet more perfect by observing the ceremonies of the *Jewish* law.

THIS is evidently the true meaning of the Terms, *Faith* and *Works*, the *Law* and *Grace*, the *Spirit* and the *Flesh*, in these Epistles; and under these Terms the whole design of his discourse, is plainly nothing else but to show; *That*

First, THE *Jewish* Religion having proved insufficient to make men truly holy, as natural Religion also had before done, there was therefore a necessity of setting up another institution of Religion, which might be more available and effectual to that end. Now the setting up a new institution of Religion, necessarily implying the abolishing of the

S E R M.

V.

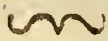


old, it follows that Christianity was not to be added to *Judaism*, but that *Judaism* was to be changed into Christianity, *i. e.* that the *Jewish* Religion was from thence forward to cease, and the Christian Religion to succeed in its room: this argument the Apostle insists upon in *ch. i. ii. v. vi. and vii.* to the *Romans*, and in *ch. i. and iv.* to the *Galatians*. In *ch. i. and ii.* of the Epistle to the *Romans*, he shows that the *Jewish* Religion had proved insufficient to make men truly holy, as the natural Religion had before done ; in the *vth ch.* of that Epistle to the *Romans* and in the *1st* to the *Galatians*, he gives an account of the Institution of the Christian Religion, as more available and effectual to that end ; in the *viith ch.* to the *Romans*, he shows that this new Institution of Religion necessarily implies the abolishing of the old one, and this he does from the similitude of a Woman's being bound by the Law to her Husband so long as he lives, but if her Husband be dead she is freed from the Law of her Husband ; which Similitude he applies, ver. 4 ;

Wherefore my brethren ye also are become
dead

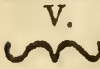
dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God: In the ivth ch. to the Galatians he proves the same thing from the similitude of a young heir's being under a governour or tutor; ver. 1; I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a Servant, tho' he be Lord of all; But is under tutors and governours until the time appointed of the father; Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world; But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons; i. e. The Jewish Law was an Institution of Religion adapted by God in great condescension to the weak apprehensions of that people; but when the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son Jesus Christ to institute a more perfect form of Religion, after the settlement of which in the World the former dispensation was to

S E R M.
V.


S E R M. V.  cease: And that it must needs do so, is evident also from the nature of the thing itself; For as after remission of Sin obtained by the sufficient Sacrifice of Christ, there needed no more legal Sacrifices to be offered for Sin; so in all other its ritual parts, the first Covenant was in course taken away by establishing the second; there being necessarily *a disannulling of the Commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof*; Heb. vii. 18. *That*

Secondly; T H E Summ and Essence of all Religion is Obedience to the moral and eternal Law of God. Since therefore the ceremonies of the *Jewish* Law were never of any esteem in the Sight of God, any otherwise than as they promoted this great end, and prepared mens hearts for the reception of that more perfect Institution of religion, wherein God was to be worshipped and obeyed in Spirit and in truth; 'tis manifest that when this more perfect institution of Religion was settled, the former and more imperfect one was to cease: This argument the
Apostle

Apostle insists on in the iid *ch.* to the *Romans*, and in the iiid to the *Galatians*; in the iid to the *Romans* he shows that every institution of Religion, and particularly the Jewish, was no otherwise of any esteem in the sight of God, than as it promoted that great end of obedience to his moral and eternal Law; For circumcision, says he, verily profiteth if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law thy circumcision is made uncircumcision; therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it keep the law, judge thee who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God; ver. 25. to the end. In the iiid chapter to the *Galatians* he argues, that the Jewish religion having been thus instituted only to prepare men for that o-

S E R M. V.  bedience to the eternal Law of God, which was to be the summ and essence of the Christian Religion; it follows that when this latter and more perfect institution took place, there was no need of continuing the former: *The law, saith he, was added only because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; v. 19. and 23: and before faith came, men having been kept under the law, shut up only unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed; Wherefore the law was our School-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; But therefore, after that faith was come, they were no longer to be under That Law. That*

Thirdly; T H E Religion of Abraham was acceptable to God, before the giving of the Law; the Scripture saying expressly that the Gospel was preached before unto Abraham: and consequently it could not but be acceptable likewise, after the abolishing of the Law.

Lastly; T H A T by the posterity of Abraham, were not meant strictly those who descended from Abraham according to the flesh; but the children

dren of the promise (that is, *as many as* S E R M.
are of the faith of Abraham) shall be V.
counted for the seed: That the true reli-
 gion therefore and service of God, was
 not to be confined always to the nation
 of the *Jews*, who were the posterity of
Abraham according to the flesh; but the
Gentiles also, which believe, have attained
 to righteousness, *even the righteousness*
which is of faith; That is; Those of all
 nations as well *Gentiles* as *Jews*, who em-
 brace the Gospel, which is the same with
 the Religion of *Abraham*, shall be justified
 with faithful *Abraham*. And this Ar-
 gument the Apostle insists upon in the
 ixth, xth, and xith chapters of the E-
 pistle to the *Romans*, and in the ivth to
 the *Galatians*. These are the sum of the
 Arguments which the Apostle makes use of
 in these two Epistles, to prove against the
 Judaizing Christians, that there was no
 necessity of retaining the *Jewish* Religion
 together with the Christian. And from
 the largeness, strength, and force of these
 Arguments we have again another con-
 vincing proof, that the determination of
 this question is indeed the principal, if

S E R M. not the only scope and design of the A-
 V. postle in these Epistles: For nothing can
 be more absurd than to suppose, that the
 Apostle should most strongly and largely
 demonstrate a thing which he did not de-
 sign to write about at all; or on the other
 hand that he should design to write about
 a thing and make it the subject of his
 Discourse, and yet prove it by such in-
 tricate and obscure arguments, as the
 wisest and cunningest of men should ne-
 ver be able to reconcile either with the
 rest of the Scripture or with themselves.
 And these are they, who in the *ixth* chap-
 ter to the *Romans*, and in so many other
 mistaken places of these Epistles, are cal-
 led predestinate, elect, the election, and
 the like.

AND now from what has been said,
 I shall, in order to practice, draw two or
 three useful inferences; and so con-
 clude. And

1st; F R O M hence it appears, that tho'
 the essence of Religion be eternally and
 immutably the same, yet the form and
 institution of it may be and often has
 been changed. The essence of all Reli-
 gion

gion is Obedience to that moral and eternal Law, which obliges us to imitate the Life of God in justice, mercy, and holiness, that is, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. This is the summ of natural Religion, as appears from the Discourses of those wiser Heathens, who were freest from prejudice and superstition; This was the summ of the *Jewish* Religion, as appears from the frequent and earnest protestations of God to that people, by his servants the Prophets; and this also is the summ of Christian Religion, as St *Paul* expressly asserts; *Tit.* ii. 12. But though Religion itself be thus immutably the same, yet the form and institution thereof may be different. When natural Religion, because of its difficulty and obscurity in the present corrupt estate of human nature, proved ineffectual to make men truly religious; God left them no longer to the guidance of their reason only, but gave them first the Patriarchal and afterwards the Moisaick dispensation; and when This also, by reason of its being burdened with so many ritual observances, proved ineffectual

S E R M.
V.


S E R M. tual to the same great end, God abolished
 V. This form of Religion also, and instituted
 the Christian. In all which proceeding
 there is no reflection at all upon the im-
 mutable nature of God: For as the divine
 nature is in the truest and highest sense
 unchangeable, so Religion itself in its na-
 ture and essence is likewise unchangeable;
 But as the capacities, the prejudices, and
 the circumstances of men are different;
 so the institution and outward form of
 that Religion, which in its essence is al-
 ways the same, may be and hath been
 changed by the good pleasure of God.

2dly; If the whole and only design of
St Paul, in these Epistles, to the *Romans*
 and *Galatians*, be to prove, that God *hath*
 indeed made this change, of the institu-
 tion, of Religion from the *Jewish* to the
 Christian; and to vindicate his justice in
 so doing; then we ought never so to
 understand any passages in these Epistles,
 as if the Apostle designed to magnify *one*
 Christian *Virtue* in opposition to all or
 any of the rest; but only that he would
 set forth the perfection of the Virtues of
 the *Christian* Religion, without the cere-
 monies

monies of the Jewish. Thus when he S E R M.
tells us that we are justified by faith with- V.
out works, we must by no means interpret it, as some have absurdly done, of the Faith of the Christian Religion in opposition to the Works of the Christian Religion; but of the Faith of the Gospel, in opposition to the external works of the Jewish Law: For so the Apostle himself expressly explains it; *Gal. v. 6; In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love; i. e.* it is now of no importance whether a man observes the works of the Jewish Religion or no, if he maintains but the faith and the obedience of the Christian. But as to the Works of the Christian Religion, the same Apostle every where urgeth *their* necessity; and particularly the five last chapters of the Epistle to the *Romans*, are a most earnest exhortation to be fruitful therein.

3dly; FROM hence it follows that there is no contradiction between St *Paul* and St *James*, when the one says, that *a man is justified by faith without works*, and the other says, that *faith without works cannot*

S E R M. *not justify*; For the one speaking professedly of the works of the *Jewish* Religion, and the other of the works of the Christian, 'tis plain that the Faith of the Christian Religion may avail to justify a man without the Works of the *Jewish* Religion, which is the assertion of *St Paul*; though it cannot do so without the works of the Christian Religion, which is the assertion of *St James*; So that there is no other difference between these two great Apostles, than as if a man should say, that believing the Christian Religion is sufficient to salvation without obeying the law of *Moses*, but that it cannot be so without obeying the commands of *Christ*.

Fourthly; FROM hence we may infer, that when any two passages of Scripture seem contrary one to another, whereof the one be controversial and the other plain and moral; we must always endeavour to accommodate the controversial passage to the plain one, and not the plain one to the controversial. And the reason is evident; because the plain moral passage cannot be mistaken, being interpreted according to the most obvious and literal sense; but
the

the sense of the controversial passage cannot be rightly understood, without understanding the particular controversy about which it was written. S E R M.
V.

Fifthly and Lastly; IF St Paul so severely treated the Judaizing Christians, as to call them perverters of the Gospel of Christ, and esteem them as preachers of another Gospel; then let us also take heed lest on the authority of men we preach or obey at any time any other Gospel, than what Christ and his Apostles preached and obeyed. If those men, who together with the simplicity and spiritual nature of the Christian Religion, would needs retain also those ceremonial observances which God himself had appointed under the *Jewish* dispensation; were accounted so much to trouble the Church of God, that the Apostle declares that though it were an *Angel* from Heaven that should preach any such doctrine, he should be accursed: then let *us* take care, lest in a higher degree we be found guilty of the same crime, if with the great and moral duties, those weightier matters of the law, we not only equal the outward and ceremonial part of Religion,
but

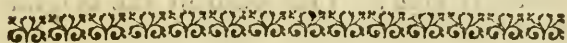
S E R M. but also prefer it before them ; accounting
V. our selves sufficiently religious if we have
but the *form* of Godliness, though we deny the *power* thereof. But let no man deceive you, saith St *John* ; He that *doth* righteousness, *and he only*, shall be accounted righteous in the sight of God.





S E R M O N VI.

The Practice of Virtue the greatest
Security against our Enemies.




I P E T E R iii. 13.

*And who is he that will harm you, if you
be followers of that which is good?*



THE Apostle having in the former S E R M. VI.
part of this Chapter exhorted us
to the practice of several particu-
lar duties; proceeds in the 10th
Verse, to enforce his exhortations with *such*
motives, as are apt to work *most* effectually
on the minds of men: He inforces it
with the consideration of the *blessing* and
happiness, that attends the performance of
V O L. X. K those

S E R M. those duties. *He that will love life, faith*
 VI. *he, and see good days, let him refrain his*
 *tongue from evil, and his lips that they*
speak no guile; let him eschew evil and do
good, let him seek peace and ensue it; for
the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,
and his ears are opened unto their prayers;
but the face of the Lord is against them
that do evil. To which words, cited out
 of the 34th Psalm, the Apostle adds in
 the words of the text, *And who is he that*
will harm you if ye be followers of that
which is good? The word in the original
 signifies indifferently, either *will* or *shall*
 harm you; and so the Text plainly con-
 tains this double proposition: That if a
 man be a follower of that which is good,
 'tis *probable* Men *will* not have any *desire*
 to harm him; and if they *would*, yet 'tis
certain no man *shall* have any *power* to do
 it: 'Tis the most likely method to make all
 men our *friends*; and if it does not that,
 yet 'tis the most certain security that they
 shall not be able to hurt us, though they
 be enemies.

I. *First*; If a man be a follower of
 that which is good, *i. e.* a sincere pra-
 ctiser of universal righteousness, 'tis pro-

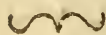
greatest security against our Enemies. 131

nable no man will have any desire to harm S E R M.
him. And that for these two Reasons, VI.
1st, because God in the wise dispensations
of his Providence does frequently incline
mens hearts to be favourable to those that
are truly and sincerely good; And 2^{dly},
because Goodness does of its own nature,
tend to the gaining mens affections and
making them our friends.

1st, GOD himself, in the wise Dis-
pensations of his providence, does fre-
quently incline mens hearts to be favoura-
ble to those who are truly and sincerely
good; Whether he does this at any time
directly by his own immediate power, or
by the secret disposition of natural and
second causes; by the interposition of more
or fewer instruments; or without using
any at all, is not material to enquire; for
natural causes are but *his* Instruments.
Certain it is, that he in whose hand the
hearts of all men are, as the Scripture every
where testifies, can, when he pleases, by
any of these ways, give us favour in their
Sight, and make even our enemies to be
at peace with us.

SERM.

VI.



Secondly, VIRTUE and goodness does in its own nature tend to the gaining mens affections and making them our friends; it forceth necessarily a certain love and veneration from all men, and challengeth honour even from those who will not imitate what they are forced to respect; So that he who is truly and sincerely virtuous, must be, as most certainly acceptable to God, so in all probability approved of men. Prov. iii. 3, 4; Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck, write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding, in the sight of God and Man. The practice of Virtue and true Religion, is a conformity to those eternal rules of justice and righteousness, which are as unchangeable as the difference of Good and Evil, being founded in the nature of God and of things: 'Tis also an imitation of the actions of God himself. And as no man is so stupid as not to admire the perfections of the divine nature, when he considers them abstractedly in God, so he cannot but pay a proportionable respect to whatever he sees bear their resemblance in men.

Hence

Hence virtue is of all things upon Earth S E R M.
the most lovely and venerable ; approving VI.
itself whether men will or no, to their rea-
son and judgment : And especially where
it is most conspicuous ; as in the Lives of
virtuous and religious Governours, who
then most illustriously appear the true Vice-
gerents of God, when That Power which
they receive *from* him, they imploy and
exercise in imitation *of* him. But 'tis
likewise true in proportion, even in the
meanest persons ; that Virtue and Piety,
wherever they are found, necessarily com-
mand esteem and honour : And this not
only from good and religious men ; but
even vicious persons themselves, tho' they
will not *do* righteousness, yet commonly
they cannot forbear giving it its true cha-
racter and commendation in others. The
Officers who were sent out by the Pharisees
to apprehend our Saviour, could not for-
bear declaring, that he spake as never man
spake ; and the *Roman* Governour, when
he gave Sentence that he should be cruci-
fied, could not at the same instant forbear
openly professing that he found no fault
in him. The very worst of men cannot

SERM. VI. chuse but have a good Opinion of that virtue, which the dominion of their lusts will not *suffer them to practice, or which their present temporal Interest* compels them to discountenance. In any business of importance, much rather would they imploy a righteous and conscientious person, than any of the companions and partakers of their Vices. In a Word; they cannot but frequently wish that they themselves were the men they are not; and pray with *Balaam*, that tho' they imitate not the *life*, yet at least they might *die the death of the Righteous, and that their last end might be like his.*

FURTHER, Religion and Virtue *must* naturally tend to the gaining mens affections and making them our friends; because it renders a man evidently both a profitable member of the publick, and likewise useful to all men in whatever *private* relation they stand to him. It makes him modest and humble, peaceable and submissive to his *superiours*, in all just and reasonable instances. To his *equals* he is just and faithful, using all plainness and sincerity in his dealings: In his conversation
injuring

injuring and abusing no man; but with S E R M.
gentleness and forgiveness, melting the VI.
hearts even of his enemies, and making
them to be at peace with him. To his
inferiours he is gentle and condescending;
not oppressing the weak, nor dealing hardly
with those that are under his Power; but
encouraging them by his example in the
ways of Virtue, and in all kind of exi-
gencies, assisting and relieving them to the
utmost of his Ability. This is the beha-
viour of a truly religious person in all re-
lations; a behaviour, which not only
gains esteem as far as its good effects actu-
ally extend, but which raises admiration
in us even when we meet with it in the
History of past and far distant ages, where
'tis manifest we can have no concern for
the events of things, nor prejudices con-
cerning the Characters of Persons: Nay,
which we cannot but commend, even
though it happens to be *against* our pre-
sent Interest; for the same reason, as on
the contrary men cannot but hate base Ac-
tions and dislike unworthy Persons, even
at the same time that perhaps they profit
by them. But here it is obvious to inquire;

S E R M. VI. If these things be so, how then comes it to pass that good men have so often been hated and persecuted in the world? How comes it to pass that men zealous and eminent for Piety, have in all ages suffered so much upon the account of Virtue and true Religion? Upon this it may be proper to observe, *1st*, that All sufferings even of men zealously religious, are not upon the account of God and Religion. If men through heat and false Zeal, factiously at any time disturb the peace, the order and quiet of their Country; if they seditiously oppose lawful Authority, and spread Doctrines inconsistent with civil Government, or with good Manners; such as are several of the principles, and has frequently been the practice of the Church of *Rome*; and be punished for so doing; this is not suffering for Virtue's sake. *2^{dly}*, 'Tis to be observed, that when the best and most truly pious men are hated and persecuted, 'tis not because Virtue itself is not always amiable, but because the persecutors mistake through their own wicked prejudices, and look upon the best of men as profane and irreligious. Of this

this kind were all the persecutions of the S E R M.
best and purest Christians in the primitive VI.
times: 'Tis certain these men were emi-
nently virtuous and religious, and 'tis cer-
tain they suffered merely upon that ac-
count; but then 'tis also as certain, that
those by whom they suffered, did not per-
secute them because they thought them
religious, but because through their own
Idolatrous and wicked prejudices they took
them for persons most profane. They did
not persecute them because they thought
them to be worshippers of the *true* God,
but because they found them to be despi-
sers of their *false* ones. This made them
implacably persecute that Doctrine, the
evidence and conviction, the Holiness and
Excellency of which, if they would have
opened their eyes, they could not possibly
have resisted. Another Reason likewise
why the best of Men may be insulted and
persecuted, is because it may happen to
serve a present private interest of those
who oppress them; notwithstanding that
at the same time it cannot be denied, but
in their judgment and conscience they must
honour and respect them. This was plainly
the

S E R M. VI. the case, in the condemnation of our Saviour. He was manifestly innocent of the crimes laid to his charge, and *Pilate* knew him to be so; but then 'tis also manifest that he did not condemn him because he was innocent, but because he was willing to do the *Jews* a pleasure. Our Saviour's innocence was sufficient to convince the mind of his Judge, and 'twas only interest that prevailed over the force of that conviction. But 3dly, Supposing none of these to be the case; and that good men are sometimes persecuted and hated for this very reason only because they are known to *be* such; (which I think rarely happens:) yet *still*, (as in all moral Maxims, 'tis sufficient if they hold true for the greater part,) yet *still*, I say, Virtue is undoubtedly the most direct, the *most* certain and effectual means in the world, to gain the love and favour of all men, tho' possibly it may sometimes fail of obtaining that effect. *A soft answer*, saith *Solomon*, *turneth away wrath*, and 'tis certain that 'tis the most probable way to do it; though there may perhaps be some men in the world of so ill a disposition, that

that they will rather be inflamed than S E R M.
softened by the gentlest Entreaties. In like VI.
manner 'tis visible there may be, and 'tis

too certain there have been and are some persons of so very ill a Spirit, that they will hate and persecute a righteous man for no other reason, but because they know him to be so: And therefore it must not be affirmed that religion and piety will every where at all times certainly and infallibly gain the favour and good will of all men, but only that 'tis the most probable and rational means that can possibly be used to that end, and that in most cases it really does so, though it will indeed sometimes prove otherwise. For this reason the Apostle, when he had said in the words of the Text, *Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?* adds immediately in the next words, *But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terrour, neither be troubled;* i. e. if ye be truly virtuous and religious, 'tis probable and you may reasonably expect that men will love and respect you; but if it should happen otherwise,

S E R M.

VI.



wife, as it will sometimes do; if you should be hated and persecuted for Righteousness sake, let not this trouble or disquiet you; yea, rather think your selves happy, that you are accounted worthy to suffer for God, that is, for Virtue or Truth's sake; who can and will deliver you in his good time from your enemies, or if he does it not in this world, will reward you abundantly in the next. For,

II. *Secondly*; If we be followers of that which is good, 'tis certain no man, whatever his *will* be, shall have any *power* to do us any real harm: The Truth of which may appear from the following considerations.

1st, T H A T the providence of God does in a peculiar manner watch over the Righteous, to preserve them under All Events. *The Eyes of the Lord*, says Solomon, *are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*; Prov. xv. 3. As he at first created, so he still upholds, and rules all things by the word of his power; He orders and governs all the motions in the great fabrick of the world, and directs the operations of all causes to the effecting his designs. Whom he protects, no
force

force or counsel can hurt; for he break-
eth the arms of the mighty, and bringeth S E R M.
the counsel of the wicked to nought. VI.
 When *Sennacherib the Assyrian* came against *Jerusalem* with that mighty host, he could put his hook in his nose, and his bridle in his lips, and cause him to return by the same way that he came; and when *Balak King of Moab*, trusting more to his Policy than Strength, sent for *Balaam* to curse the *Israelites*, he could turn that curse into a blessing: So that there was no enchantment against *Jacob*, nor divination against *Israel*. Indeed the whole history of the *Jewish* nation, from the coming out of *Egypt*, to their final captivity, is one continued and eminent instance of providence watching over the righteous. *In the wilderness* God led them like sheep, and kept them as the apple of his eye; He suffered no man to do them wrong, but reprov'd even Kings for their sake. When they came to enter into the promised Land, no force was able to stand before them; and when they were possessed of it, no nation was able to drive them out. Particularly when the whole body of them went up
 to

S-E R M. to *Jerusalem* to appear before the Lord
 VI. thrice in the year, their land was by
 a peculiar providence preserved from
 being invaded, as was promised them,
Exod. xxxiv. 24. In a word; so long as
 they kept God's Commandments, so that
he did not behold iniquity in Jacob, neither
had seen perverseness in Israel; they were
 constantly happy and dwelt safely; and
 though we often read indeed that they
 were oppressed by their enemies and
 brought to great distress, yet this never
 happened but when they had first depart-
 ed from their integrity; which made *Moses*
 break out into that affectionate exclama-
 tion, *Deut. xxxii. 30; How should one*
chace a thousand, and two put ten thousand
to flight, except their rock had sold them,
and the Lord had shut them up! Now
 the same Providence that preserves whole
 nations, watches likewise proportionably
 over single persons; For so we read of
David, 2 Sam. viii. 6, that the Lord pre-
served him whithersoever he went; And
 though under the Gospel dispensation,
 where immortality is more clearly brought
 to light, and the promise of eternal life
 more

more exprefs; temporal rewards and protection do not fo constantly attend the Righteous; yet does Providence by no means wholly neglect them even *here*: But God's eyes are ftill upon the ways of man, and he feeth all their goings. *Are not two Sparrows, fays our Saviour, fold for a farthing? and one of them fhall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbred;* St Mat. x. 29.

2dly; The enemies of a righteous man cannot do him any real harm, becaufe they cannot take from him any thing wherein his true and proper Happinefs confifts. His Happinefs confifts in imitating God, the Fountain and Spring of *all* Happinefs; and by copying out the divine perfections in a holy life, to become partaker of the divine nature: Nor can any thing poffibly make him miserable, but what feparates him from the favour and from the likenefs of God. Christians indeed are not Stoicks, nor can they be altogether infenfible of what happens to them in the prefent life; fo that did they wholly depend on that prefence of mind, that

S E R M. VI. that sufficiency which Virtue does of its own nature furnish the Soul with, it must after all be confessed, that the troubles and calamities of this life, notwithstanding all the boasts of some vain-glorious Philosophers, would be very grievous to them. But then if all these afflictions shall be abundantly recompensed to them both in this world and the next; if there be no man who has left father or mother, or houses or lands, for Christ's sake, who shall not in this present state receive not only equivalents but an hundred-fold, and in the end eternal life; where *then* is the real mischief of these losses? Persecution may deprive such persons of their present possessions; but it cannot despoil them of those *bags that wax not old, that treasure laid up for them in the heavens, where moth and rust corrupt not, and where thieves break not through and steal.* It may deprive them of all the comforts of this life, and even life it self; but it cannot hinder them of that eternal inheritance, the joyful expectation of which keeps them from being miserable here, as the enjoyment of it will make them for ever

greatest security against our Enemies. 145

ever happy hereafter. For in the S E R M.

VI.

3^d and last place, whatever loss a good man sustains in the world upon the account of his concern for Truth and Virtue, shall be abundantly made good to him in that which is to come ; and consequently 'tis so far from doing him any real harm, that it ought rather to be accounted a Gain than a Loss. *For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ;* 2 Cor. iv. 17 : and St Paul accounts, Rom. viii. 18 ; *that the sufferings of this present time ; are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* The new Testament is every where exceeding full and express in this matter ; though indeed in the old Testament these promises are not so very clear ; The reason whereof, seems to be this. The *Jews* were a peculiar nation chosen of God to be a standing instance of his providence in the government of the world, and of his rewarding Virtue and punishing Vice ; the promises therefore and threatnings upon their obedience or disobedience, were made to that nation considered as a body politick, and

VOL. X.

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therefore

S E R M. therefore must of necessity have been such
 VI. as could belong to a nation as such, and
 be conspicuous to the world; *i. e.* they
 must needs have been temporal. That national Sins can be punished only with temporal punishments, is not indeed a just observation: Because national Sins are nothing but the Sins of the particular persons that constitute a Nation; and therefore *may* receive their particular punishment in a future state. But *such* rewards or punishments of a Nation, as are intended to be *Instances of God's providence in this World*, and Evidences of his governing a People, these 'tis manifest must of necessity be temporal. And this was plainly the case of the *Jews*, considered as a Nation. Of a future state, where every individual person in particular, should be rewarded or punished according to his private behaviour, they had *sufficient* proof, from those daily and undeniable evidences which they peculiarly had of the Being and Providence of God; from God's Dealings with the patriarchs; from the typical and figurative interpretation of their temporal promises; and from the preaching of their
 Prophets.

Prophets. But now the Gospel-dispen-
S E R M.
tion not being made to any particular na-
VI.
tion or body of men as such, but to all
individual persons; the blessings promised
to obedience and the curses threatned to
disobedience were to be such as concerned
particular persons only; and therefore
might as well relate to the future state as the
present. Hence rewards and punishments
are not now so equally distributed in this
life; that future state being more clearly
and fully discovered, wherein all inequa-
lities of this kind shall be set right, and
where God has promised that they who
suffer with Christ, shall be also glorified
with him: So far therefore are wicked
men from being able to hurt those who
are followers of that which is good, that
even when they think they have gained
their purpose, and have it in their power
to satisfy their malice to the utmost; they
even then contribute to the happiness of
those pious and religious persons, whom
they intend to make miserable.


THE Application of what has been said,
is evident. If by a sincere endeavour after the
performance of our duty in the general course

S E R M. of our lives, we have made God our friend ;

VI.

we are taught not to be afraid of any thing else. Let us trust in *him* for deliverance under *Any* sort of affliction whatsoever, who is abundantly *able*; and hath promised that he *will* preserve us, so that nothing shall by any means hurt us. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high*, saith the Psalmist, *i.e.* he that feareth God, *shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*; *i. e.* under his secure protection. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisom pestilence; He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust, his truth shall be thy shield and buckler; Psal. xci. ver. 1 : and Job v. 19, &c; He shall deliver thee from six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from Death; and in War, from the Power of the Sword. Thou shalt be hid from the Scourge of the Tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of Destruction when it cometh. And fear ye not the reproach of men, saith the Prophet; neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall

greatest security against our Enemies. 149

shall eat them up like a garment, and the S E R M.
worm shall eat them like wool; but my VI.
righteousness shall be for ever, and my 

salvation from generation to generation;
Isai. li. 7, 8. Let us therefore endeavour by sincerity and universal righteousness and goodness, to make all men our friends; or at least, if it will not have that effect, let us thereby secure our selves that they shall not be able to hurt us tho' they be enemies; Let us by a life of piety and true holiness, make our peace with God; and then we need not fear what men can do unto us: To conclude, let us secure to our selves a portion in that happiness which is to come, and then if we be not delivered from sufferings and afflictions here, they shall (which is much better than deliverance) be compensated at last by that felicity, which will go as far beyond our expectation, as all temporal enjoyments come short of it; and will exceed even our imagination no less than our hope. For *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

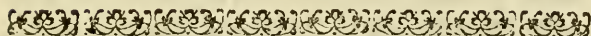
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S E R M O N



S E R M O N VII.

Of the Nature and Extent of false
Witness.



PROV. xxiv. 28, 29.

*Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour
without Cause, and deceive not with thy
Lips: Say not, I will do to Him, as
He hath done to Me; I will render to
the man according to his Works.*



HERE is nothing generally S E R M.
more dear and valuable to VII.
men, than their reputation or
good Name: Prov. xxii. 1;

*A good name is rather to be
chosen than great Riches, and loving Fa-
vour rather than silver and gold. The*

SER M. Esteem of wise and good men, is the
 VII. greatest of all *Temporal* Encouragements
 to Virtue; and 'tis a Mark of an abandoned Spirit, to have no Regard to it. One case indeed there is, wherein the opinion of the World is not to be regarded: Which is, when the Circumstances of things are such, that the *adhering to Truth and Virtue* will necessarily expose a man to the Reproaches of *ill* men, and to the mistaken Censures of Many also who perhaps otherwise are *good*. In *This* case, *Blessed are ye*, says our Saviour, *when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven; For so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* But in all other cases, Reputation or a good Name is justly to be valued. 'Tis what the wisest and best men, have always been very tender of preserving *in themselves*; and what good Christians ought therefore to make great Conscience of taking wrongfully from *Others*. In *some* Instances, a clear reputation has been esteemed more valuable

able even than Life itself ; and, in many S E R M. circumstances, despoiling men of their good name, is in effect the same thing as VII. defrauding them of their Property. So much *reputation*, is always so much *Power* ; and according to mens Esteem and Credit in the World, so much proportionably is their Influence and the Weight they have in it. For the same reasons therefore, that we are obliged not to injure our Neighbour in his *Person* or *Property* ; for the same reasons ought we to be very tender, of his *good name* and *reputation* : Always having a just Regard to Truth and Charity, and to the Benefit and Advantage of the Publick. *Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour without Cause, and deceive not with thy Lips : Say not, I will do to Him, as He has done to Me ; I will render to the man according to his Works.*

Who is meant by our *Neighbour*, in *This* and *all other* Precepts of the like nature ; our Saviour has explained to us in his Parable of the *good Samaritan*. Where, by declaring *Him* to be the afflicted man's *Neighbour*, who, though a *Stranger*,
 2 though

S E R M. though a *Foreigner*, though of a *different*
 VII. *Seet and Party* from him both in *religion*
 and *polity*, yet assisted and saved him in
 a time of extreme distress; he shows us
 that our *Neighbours*, in the Sense of the
 divine Precepts, are not Those only who
dwell near us, or with whom we chance
 to have particular *Acquaintance*, or who
 are of the *same Seet* or denomination
 with ourselves; but *whomsoever* among *all*
Mankind we have any Concern with;
whomsoever it happens at any time to be
 in our Power either to *injure* or *do kind-*
ness to; in a word, *whosoever* can in any
 respect become the *better* or the *worse*, or
 receive any *Hurt* or any *Benefit*, by our
Behaviour towards them. This is the
 meaning of the word, *Neighbour*, in *Script-*
ture-language, and in the *religious* estima-
 tion of things: and in *This* sense 'tis to
 be understood in the *Text*, and in all
 other moral exhortations; *Be not a Wit-*
ness against thy Neighbour without cause,
and deceive not with thy Lips.

THE word which we here render, *de-*
ceive; signifies, in the original, *any da-*
mage, *any inconvenience*, brought upon a
 man

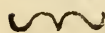
man in the way of slander, calumny, S E R M. VII. back-biting, or any other injurious manner of representing him. The sense of the expression is the same, as in That *Other Passage* in the same book, ch. xxvi. 18; *As a mad-man who casteth Fire-brands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his Neighbour, (that is, who revileth, defameth, or leads his Neighbour into Any Mischief,) and saith, Am not I in sport?*

THE Meaning of the particular Phrases in the Text, being thus explained; I shall, in the following Discourse, *First*, set forth the *Nature and Extent* of the Sin here forbidden; together with the proper *limitation* of the Cases and Circumstances, to which it *does* or *does not extend*. And *Secondly*, I shall alledge the suitable *Reasons and Motives*, which ought to influence our Practice in this matter. *Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour without cause, and deceive not with thy Lips: Say not, I will do to Him, as He has done to Me; I will render to the man according to his Works,*

I. *First*;

S E R M.

VII.



I. *First*; IN the *first* place, the Highest and most enormous degree of the Sin here forbidden, is the deliberately giving *false evidence* in *judicial* matters, whether *criminal*, or in cases relating to *Property*. *Exod. xxiii. 1*; *Put not thine hand with the wicked, to be an unrighteous Witness*. This is a wickedness of so high a nature, and in which it is so impossible for any man's conscience to be deceived; that no man can be guilty of it in Any case, who has at all even the least *Pretence* or *Appearance* of Religion. We find an Instance of it in *Ahab's* consenting to the instructions given by *Jezebel* against *Naboth*, *1 Kings xxi. 10*; *Set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear Witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the King; and then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die*. The Character given him by the Prophet upon which account, *ver. 20*; is, that he *had Sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord*.

ANOTHER degree of the Vice condemned in the Text, is when men bear false Testimony against their Brethren, not indeed with the Solemnity of a judicial accu-

accusation before the Magistrate, but after S E R M.
a more secret manner, in private conver- VII.
sation; spreading *knowingly* and *malici-*
ously, *False Reports* concerning any per-
son, either for some *Private Advantage*
to *Themselves*, or out of *Envy* towards
Him, or in way of *Revenge* for some con-
ceived *Disobligation*. This is the case
supposed in the Text: *Be not a Witness a-*
gainst thy Neighbour without Cause: ---
Say not, I will do to Him, as He has done to
Me; I will render to the Man according
to his Works. But whether *Revenge*, or
whatever else, be the *Temptation* to the
Practice; the nature of the *Sin itself* is of
the deepest Die, and condemned among
the most detestable Crimes both by Rea-
son and Scripture. *All Lyars shall have*
their part in the lake that burneth with
Fire and Brimstone; Rev. xxi. 8. And
Our Saviour, who never spake with Se-
verity, but against Great Crimes; told the
Pharisees, when they spread false and ma-
licious Accusations against him, that they
imitated herein *their Father the Devil*,
Joh. viii. 44; That the Devil was himself
a Lyar from the Beginning; a *Lyar*, in
the

S E R M. the sense of spreading *false Accusations* ;
 VII. (so the word, Διδβολῆς, properly signifies:) And that he was the *Father*, and *Promoter*, of it in *Others*.

BUT further, there are still *lower degrees* of the Fault reprov'd in the Text ; which, as they are less scandalous in the eye of the World, and less shocking to inconsiderate Minds, so there is more danger of mens falling into them, and greater Care needful to preserve ourselves from the guilt of them. Of This kind, is the *careless* and *rash* Custom of spreading censorious and uncharitable Reports to the disadvantage of Our Neighbour, *without at all knowing* whether there be *any Truth* in the accusation, or any *just Ground and Foundation* for the Censure. Under which Head, come innumerable sorts of Calumny, Detraction, Slander, Evil-speaking, Back-biting, Tale-bearing, rash Judgment, and the like. In which matters, the *Occasions*, upon which it is very incident *even* to those who are *not* of malicious Tempers, to be faulty through *Negligence*, and Want of Care and Attention ; the *Occasions*, I say, which lead
 men

men to be faulty in This particular, are, in the course of common life, so *perpetually* returning ; that the Scripture represents That person as a very *perfect* man indeed, who can be continually upon his Guard against This Errour. *In many things* (says the Apostle) *we offend all : If any man offend not in Word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the Whole Body.* The Author of the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* had before made the same Observation, *ch. xix. 16 ; There is one that slippeth in his Speech, but not from his Heart ; and who is He that hath not offended with his tongue ?* The Psalmist in like manner, *Pf. xv. 1 ; Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy Holy Hill ? Even---- He that hath used no deceit in his tongue,---- and hath not slandered his Neighbour.* The Caution therefore he thought *necessary*, to preserve himself from *This Surprise*, is very remarkable : *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue : And, Set a Watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my Lips ; Pf. cxli. 3.* Without great consideration and habi-

S E R M. habitual seriousness, the *perpetual* Incidents of *This* temptation *will* betray men into Folly ; and *In multitude of words there wanteth not Sin* ; Prov. x. 19.

Lastly ; THE *Last and Lowest* Degree of the Fault we are now considering, is when men are *censorious* towards their Brethren, in spreading abroad things *neither false nor dubious*, but *certainly true* ; yet *needlessly*, and *contrary to the Laws of Charity* : Declaring their Neighbours *real* infirmities, or *real* Faults, to his Disadvantage ; without serving the purpose of Any true Benefit, either to *Him* or *Others*. This Practice was Thus forbidden under the Law, *Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer among thy people* ; Levit. xix. 16. And though the words of my Text, 'tis evident, have principal Regard to *false* accusation ; yet literally and very properly they extend also to *uncharitable Truth* : *Be not a Witness against thy Neighbour*, without Cause.

INDEED, in all Cases where either the Administration of *publick Justice*, or the manifest Benefit and Advantage of *Private good Christians*, requires it ; In all
These

These cases, 'tis mens *Duty* to accuse Criminals of all Sorts, and to bear Testimony against them in Righteousness and Truth: But in *other* cases, 'tis evidently a Breach of Christian Charity, to take delight in spreading even *True* Reports needlessly, to the Damage or Disadvantage of our Neighbour. In matters of *Private Offence*, 'tis the part of a Christian, *privately* to reprove the person offending: And the Benefit of so doing, may be very great. *Ecclus xix. 13; Admonish a friend, it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more. Admonish thy Friend, it may be he hath not said it; and if he have, that he speak it not again. If thy Brother (says our Saviour) shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more.---- And if he shall neglect to hear Them, tell it unto the Church.* That is: Use all possible means, in the privatest and most friendly manner, to a-

S E R M.
VII.

mend and reform him : But if *This Method* proves unsuccessful, then *tell it to the Church*, tell it to *the Congregation*, tell it to *a Number* of serious and well-disposed Christians ; still for the *Benefit* of *the person reprov'd* ; that by the Advice and Exhortation of *Many*, he may be brought to Repentance. This is a thing very different from publishing mens Faults in ordinary conversation ; Wherein generally there is No View, of amending the *person censured* ; but merely of satisfying the Envy, Malice, Weakness, or vain Humour, of those who are apt to imagine they can build up to *Themselves* an *Esteem* upon the *Faults* of *Others*. Nevertheless, even in common *conversation*, the Characters of Persons are not to be confounded, as if no Difference was to be made between Virtue and Vice : But the sense of what has been said, is, that Christians ought to be so *far* from bearing at any time *false* testimony against their Brethren, that, where no real Honour can be done to Virtue, or Discredit to Vice, they ought not to take pleasure even in *Truth* uncharitable and not needful to be exposed.

H A V I N G


HAVING thus at large explained the S E R M.
Nature and Extent of the *Sin* forbidden VII.
in the Text, and set forth the proper *Li-*
mitations of the Cases and Circumstances
to which it *does* or *does not extend*; Which
was the *First* thing I proposed: It remains
now in the

II. *Second* place, that I proceed to lay
before you some of the principal *Reasons*
or *Motives*, which ought to influence our
Practice in this Matter. *Be not a Wit-*
ness against thy Neighbour without cause,
and deceive not with thy Lips. And

1st; F R O M the very *nature* and *con-*
stitution of humane Society, there arises o-
riginally, in the reason of things, a strong
argument why men ought to govern their
Words as well as their *Actions*. For by
the mutual intercourse of *Both*, is hu-
mane Society preserved; and by injurious
Speech, as well as by unjust *Actions*, is
That general Trust and Confidence, That
mutual Charity and Good-Will destroyed,
on which depends the Welfare and Hap-
piness of Mankind. This Argument is
urged by St Paul, Eph. iv. 25; *Putting*
away Lying, speak every man Truth with

S E R M. *his Neighbour ; for we are Members one of*
 VII. *another.* The constitution of *every hu-*
 mane Society, bears some Analogy to the
 Frame of the Natural Body : And as, in
 the *natural Body*, all Division, Disagree-
 ment, and disunion of the *Members*, tends
 necessarily to the destruction and dissolu-
 tion of the *Whole* ; so, in proportion, in all
Communities and Societies of men whatso-
 ever, the *Contentions and Animosities*, the
Disorders and Distractions, arising from
Slander, Calumny, Detraction, Unchari-
tableness, and other Instances of licentious
 Speech, are inevitably of very pernicious
 effect. The Tongue, says St James, (ch. iii.
 5, 8,) is a little member, and boasteth
 great Things : Behold, how great a mat-
 ter, a little fire kindleth : ---- it is an un-
 ruly evil, full of deadly Poison.

OF mischievous consequence it often
 is, to the person himself who indulgeth
 this Folly : Prov. xviii. 7 ; xii. 13 ; xiii.
 3 ; *A fool's Mouth is his destruction, and*
his lips are the snare of his Soul.----- *The*
wicked is snared by the transgression of his
Lips. He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth
 his life ; but he that openeth wide his lips,
 shall

shall have destruction. The Wise Authors S E R M. VII.
of the Books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclus*, ex-
press themselves excellently upon This 
Head: *The Ear of Jealousy beareth all* Wisd. i. 10.
things, and the Noise of Murmurings is not
hid: Therefore--- refrain your tongue from
Backbiting; for there is no word so secret,
that shall go for nought; and the mouth
that beliet, slayeth the Soul. He that can Ecclus. xix
rule his tongue, shall live without strife; ^{6.}
and he that hateth babling, shall have less
evil: Rebearse not unto another, that which
is told unto thee; and thou shalt fare never
the worse: Whether it be to a friend or foe,
talk not of other mens Lives; and if thou
canst without Offence, reveal them not:
For he heard and observed thee; and, when
time cometh, he will hate thee: If thou
hast heard a word, let it die with thee;
and be bold, it will not burst thee. The
natural Punishment therefore of a licen-
tious and unbridled Tongue, is the Incon-
veniencies it is very apt to bring, in the
course of things, upon the Person himself.
He that will love life, and see good days,
(he that will avoid innumerable Snares
and Troubles which careless men bring

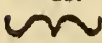
S E R M. upon themselves;) let him refrain his
 VII. *Tongue from Evil, and his Lips that they*
 speak no Guile; 1 Pet. iii. 10: Otherwise,
 he will inevitably bring upon himself an
 uneasy and unquiet Life.

THIS is the natural *ill consequence* of
 this Practice, to the persons themselves
 who are guilty of it: But the Sinfulness
 of it, appears principally in the *Damage*
 it does secretly to Others. Slander, and
 uncharitable Defamation, is a *Pestilence*
that walketh in Darkness; and a secret
 Stab, against which there is many times
 no possibility of Defence. Prov. xviii. 8;
The words of a tale-bearer are as Wounds,
and they go down into the innermost parts
of the Belly. Again, (ch. xxvi. 18;) *As*
a mad-man who casteth fire-brands, arrows,
and death; so is the man that deceiveth,
(the man that revileth, that defameth) his
neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?
 As a matter of sport or diversion, he may
 foolishly make light of it; but the ill
 consequences thereof are greater than can
 be foreseen. *The Beginning of Strife, says*
the wise man, is as when one letteth out
Water: And, *As Coals are to burning*
 Coals,

Coals, and Wood to Fire; so is a contentious man to kindle Strife. SERM.
VII.

THIS is an Argument drawn from the very Nature and Constitution of human Society in general. But

2dly; ANOTHER and a more powerful Motive to oblige men to restrain licentious Speech, is the consideration of the inconsistency of it with a due Sense of religion. If any man among you, saith St James, seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, That man's religion is vain. The reason is, because a principal part of pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this; that men approve themselves by a good conversation, with meekness of Wisdom. If therefore, says he, ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the Truth:---- For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil Work. In like manner the Apostle St Paul, among things inconsistent with, and contrary to, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; reckons up envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

S E R M. *misings, and the like; 1 Tim. vi. 4. And*
 VII. *accordingly exhorts, Eph. iv. 31; Let all*
 *bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all Malice; And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Nay, even in matters which might in themselves seem to be of smaller importance, and comparatively speaking, scarce to be taken Notice of; yet because, in consequence, they quench the Spirit of religion, and dissipate the Effect and Influence of serious consideration, therefore he reproves with great severity such persons as learn to be idle; 1 Tim. v. 13; wandering about from house to house, being Tatlers and Busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.*

3dly and lastly; Another Argument against Calumny and Detraction, and particularly against That Censoriousness which too naturally arises from Differences in opinion; is the consideration of ourselves being All of us subject to errour. What our Saviour said to the Pharisees in Another case, He that is without Sin amongst you,

you, let him first cast a Stone at her; may S E R M.
no less justly be applied to *This*; He that VII.
is infallibly secured against all Errours
Himself, let him be as censorious as he
pleases upon the Mistakes of *Others*. And
if it be upon matters relating to *Reli-*
gion, that the *Reproach and Defamation* is
founded; the Fault is still the greater, and
the more inexcusable; because 'tis pre-
sumptuously anticipating the judgment of
God towards *Others*, and provoking him
the more severely to judge *Us*. I speak
not here of the ill Character, which *is*
and *ought* to be given of all *Open Vice*
and *manifest Unrighteousness*. But men
who have different *Notions* and Apprehen-
sions of Things, are very apt to cast Re-
proach upon each other, not for their
Vices, but for their Different *Understand-*
ings. And the same Frailty, which, in a
man of the same *Seet or Party*, shall be
no Blemish at all; shall, in a person of
a different *Party*, be the most unpar-
donable Crime. The *Jews* thought every
Fault in a *Samaritan* or a *Gentile*, to be
infinitely greater than in one of their own
Nation; and the smallest *Mote* in *another's*
Eye,

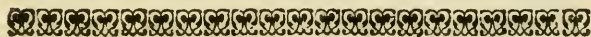
S E R M. Eye, seemed much larger to them than a
 VII. Beam in their own. This is what St Paul
 reproves, *Rom. ii. 1*; *Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; (speaking of a Jew condemning a Gentile;) for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. But This relates to Real Faults. The greater and still more inexcusable degree of this Partiality is, when men cast reproach and contempt upon Others for what is truly commendable, for doing what perhaps was their Duty to do; for being wiser, or more charitable, or more scrupulous and conscientious than Themselves. Of This, St Paul speaks; Rom. xiv. 4; Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his Own Master he standeth or falleth? St James calls it, judging the Law itself; ch. iv. 11; He that speaketh evil of his Brother, and judgeth his Brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law.--- There is one law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy: Who art thou, that judgest another? Our Saviour forbids this censoriousness towards Others, under the penalty of being more strictly judged Ourselves: Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

judged. And if concerning opprobrious and S E R M. VII.
 reproachful language to a man's face, he
 says, *Whosoever shall say unto his Brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire;*
 much more against malicious *Back-biting*
 and uncharitable *Detraction*, would he
 have used the like severity of expression.
 The reason is; because such kind of *De-*
traction and *Defamation* is really more in-
 jurious, and more difficult to be guarded
 against, and of more extensive Effect,
 than many other ways of doing wrong to
 our Neighbour. I conclude therefore with
 that declaration of our Lord, *Matt. xii. 36;*
I say unto you, that every idle word, (that
is, as appears evidently in the context, eve-
ry malicious word) that men shall speak,
they shall give account thereof in the day of
Judgment: For by thy words thou shalt be
justified, and by thy words thou shalt be
condemned.



S E R M O N V I I I.

Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud.



ACTS v. 3, 4.

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost; and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this Thing in thine Heart? Thou hast not lied unto Men, but unto God.



IN the three fore-going Chapters S E R M. of This Book, we have an VIII. Account given us of the Simplicity and Purity of that Primitive Church, which was planted immediately

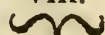
S E R M. immediately by the *Apostles themselves* upon
 VIII. their being inspired with the Holy Ghost
 ~~~~~ at Pentecost, and flourished in the very  
 Beginning even of *Their Days*. And the  
 Character we find of it, is such; as  
 contains both a most just Reproof  
 of the decaying Piety of Christians in  
 succeeding Ages, and at the same time  
 affords us a lovely and Venerable Idea of  
 the sincere and uncorrupt Manners of those  
 Primitive Disciples. *Ch. ii. ver. 42; They*  
*continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine*  
*and fellowship, and in breaking of Bread*  
*and in Prayers. Ver. 44; And all that*  
*believed, were together, and had all things*  
*common; And sold their possessions and goods,*  
*and parted them to all men, as every man*  
*had need.* Expecting, as it appears, a  
 speedy Destruction of the *Jewish Nation*,  
 and being as yet but a few scattered Peo-  
 ple, they agreed among themselves to sell  
 every one what he had, and put it into  
 one publick Stock, to be employed in fur-  
 nishing out such as were to be sent abroad  
 in the service of preaching the Gospel,  
 and to be distributed likewise for the Main-  
 tenance of them that continued in *Jeru-*  
*salem*



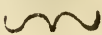
## *Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud.*

175

*Jerusalem* according to every man's Wants and Necessities. *Ver. 46; And they continued daily with one Accord in the Temple; their Practice being, constantly to frequent the Temple at the usual Hours of publick Prayer: And breaking bread from House to House,* (In the House, it should be translated; The Meaning is; meeting together in their Private Assembly to receive the Communion among themselves, after they had prayed in publick with the Jews;) *they did eat their meat with gladness and Singleness of Heart: Praising God, and having Favour with all the People; that is, by their Innocency and Simplicity of Manners, obtaining the good Opinion of all well disposed and unprejudiced Persons: According to that Admonition of St. Paul, Rom. xiv. 17; The Kingdom of God, is--- Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost; For he that in These things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of Men.* At the latter End of the 4th Chapter, as an Introduction to the History, whereof my Text is apart, the same Character of that Primitive Apostolical Church, is repeated in other Words: *Ver. 32; And the*

S E R M.  
VIII.  


S E R M. *the Multitude of them that believed, were*  
 VIII. *of one Heart, and of one Soul; living in*  
 ~~~~~ *perfect Love, and entire Unity among*  
themselves; every one being more sollici-
tous to provide for the Necessities of others,
than to lay up any thing in store for Him-
self; neither said any of them, that ought
of the things which he possessed, was his
own, but they had all things common. Ver.
33; And great Grace, was upon them all;
That is, as 'tis before expressed, ch. ii. 47,
they had great Favour with all the People:
For in the original 'tis the very same Word
in both places; Great Grace was upon them
all; and, they had great Favour with all
the people: (Which is a Phrase of the
same import, with That in Luc. ii. 52;
And Jesus increased in Wisdom and Stature,
and in Favour with God and Man.) Ver. 34;
Neither were there any among them, that
lacked; For as many as were Possessors of
Lands or Houses, sold them, and brought
the Prices of the things that were sold, and
laid them down at the Apostles feet; and
distribution was made unto every man, ac-
ording as he had need. Not that there
was any absolute Obligation or express
Command

Command upon any Man so to do; But S E R M. VIII.
 expecting, as I before observed, a speedy 
 Destruction of the *Jewish* Nation, according to our Saviour's Prophecy; and being themselves a scattered and persecuted Body of Men; and having their Hearts filled with a most excellent spirit of universal Love and Charity; they either All, or at least most of them, *voluntarily* agreed to sell what they had; and, putting it into the Apostles hands, they were for the future equally maintained out of it, as by a publick Stock. And great was the Sincerity and Simplicity of Heart, wherewith the whole Body of the first Believers exercised this universal Benevolence. But, as even among the *Apostles themselves* there had been *One* Son of Perdition; and in the very best and most excellent Institutions, Offences *will* arise; so even *here* also there was an Attempt made, to introduce a Corruption. For one *Ananias* with his Wife *Sapphira*, ver. 1. of this chapter, having *sold a Possession, kept back part of the price, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the Apostles feet*; intending thereby so to impose upon the Apostles,

SERM. as to be maintained, like the other Dis-
 VIII. ciples, out of the publick Stock of the
 Church, and yet at the same time retain
 a private portion of their Estate for them-
 selves. Upon this therefore St *Peter* re-
 plies unto them in the Words of the Text;
Ananias, why has Satan filled thine Heart,
to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back
part of the price of the land; Whilst it
remained, was it not thine own? And after
it was sold, was it not in thine own power?
Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine
Heart? Thou hast not lied unto Men, but
unto God. In the following Discourse up-
 on which Words, I shall *first* consider
 briefly *in general*, what the Crime was,
 wherewith *Ananias* is here charged by the
 Apostle. *Secondly*, I shall consider the se-
 veral *Circumstantial Aggravations* of the
 Crime, in *His Case in particular*. And
Thirdly, I shall draw some *practical* Ob-
 servations, which may be of perpetual
 Use to us, from the several Expressions con-
 tained in the Text.

I. *First*; I am to consider *in gene-
 ral*, what the Crime was, wherewith
Ananias is here charged by the Apostle.
 And this is so plainly exprest in the Words
 of

of the Text, that I suppose no man, who S E R M.
 has read this History without a Comment, VIII.
 ever mistook it. The *Foundation* of his
 Crime, was *Covetousness*; the *Effect* of that
 Covetousness, was *Diffidence*, or a *Dis-*
trust of that Maintenance, which he was
 to enjoy in common with the whole
 Church; and the actual *Crime itself*, which
 that Diffidence or covetous Disposition put
 him upon committing, and which in the
 Text is more immediately charged upon
 him, is *Fraud*: A *Fraudulent Attempt*
 to deceive the Apostles, and the whole
 Church, by putting himself upon them to
 be maintained out of the Publick Expence,
 whilst at the same Time he retained pri-
 vately to himself, that which ought to have
 been put into the publick Stock, in order
 to intitle him to receive out of it his com-
 mon Proportion. *Others* brought *all* that
 they had, and put it into the Apostle's
 Hands; and were by Them accordingly
 taken care of, as those who had nothing
 left in their private Possession: *This Man*,
 to make a double Advantage to himself,
 kept back *one half*, perhaps *more*, to him-
 self; and yet expected to have been taken

S E R M. care of by the Apostles, as one that had
 VIII. given All to the Publick, and had left nothing of his own. This is so plainly and clearly the intent of the History, that it might almost seem needless so much as to repeat it; and it can hardly be set forth in more full expressions, than it is declared in the very Words of the Text itself. Yet, I know not whence it comes to pass, many of the most learned Commentators have made a shift to mistake it; and with much Difficulty have found means to make That appear hard and intricate, which in reality was most easy and obvious. For whereas the Apostle charges *Ananias* with the *Deliberateness* of the *Fraud*; and aggravates it with the Consideration of his having been under *no Necessity* to make any *Profession* of parting with his Estate *at all*, if he was not willing to do it *in reality*; For *whilst it remained*, says he, *was it not thine own?* And after it was sold, *was it not in thine own Power?* Why hast thou then conceived this thing in thine Heart? Whereas This, I say, is evidently the Apostle's meaning; Many, on the contrary, have contended, that *after it was sold*,
 it

it was by no means any longer *in his own* S E R M. VIII.
Power; because selling it with an *Inten-*
tion to give it to the Apostles, they ima-
 gine was equivalent to an *Actual solemn*
Vow; and *That*, could not be broken
 without plain *Sacrilege*: And therefore
 those Words, *after it was sold, was it*
not in thine own Power? They interpret
 to signify, *Was it not in thy Power to have*
brought us the full price of it, and so to
have compleatly accomplished thy Vow? But,
 besides That this is a very forced and un-
 natural Interpretation of these *particular*
 Words; 'tis moreover very harsh *in the*
general, to suppose a *solemn Vow*, where-
 of there is not the least mention made,
 either in the Text or in the whole History;
 and to fix the *main Crime* upon *such a*
Circumstance, for which there does not in
 the Text appear to be so much as *any*
Foundation at all. On the other side, St
 Peter's Words, in the obvious and literal
 Sense, seem to be very easy and natural;
 that *Ananias* might, if he had pleased,
 have kept to himself, either his *Estate* or
 his *Money*; For, who compelled him to
 sell it at all? And, after it *was sold*, if he

S E R M. had a Mind to have kept the Price of it
 VIII. to himself, *Who* compelled him to de-
 ~~~~~  
 posit it in the Apostle's hands? But when  
 he *professed* to bring the whole Money in-  
 to the publick Stock of the Church, and  
 so have a Right to be maintained out of  
 that Stock; then at the same time to keep  
 back part of it by a Fraudulent Lie, and  
 with intent to deceive the Apostles and  
 impose upon the whole Body of the Dis-  
 ciples, This was evidently a very crying  
 Sin, and (without the needless Supposition  
 of a *Vow*) even no less than *Sacrilege*.

AND This, concerning the 1<sup>st</sup> particu-  
 lar, *viz.* *What* the Crime in general was,  
 wherewith *Ananias* is here charged by the  
 Apostle.

II. *Secondly*; I PROPOSED in the 2<sup>d</sup>  
 place, to consider the several *Circumstantial*  
*Aggravations* of the Crime, in *His* Case in  
*particular*. And here we may observe,  
 first, that *deliberate* or *contrived Fraud*,  
 is in itself a Crime of the deepest Malig-  
 nity, and of the most pernicious conse-  
 quences: A Sin which tends to destroy all  
 human Society, all Trust and Confidence  
 among Men, all Justice and Equity which  
 is

is the Support of the World, and without which no Society of Mankind can subsist. S E R M.  
VIII.

And the breaking through this Obligation by deliberate Fraud, is, of all other Sins, one of the most open Defiances of Conscience, and the most wilful Opposition to right Reason, that can be imagined: A Sin, for which a Man can find no Excuse, nor Extenuation in his own Mind; into the Commission of which, he can be led by no Error, by no wrong judgment, by no mistaken Opinion whatsoever; but he must of Necessity, at least for That Time, have abandoned all true Sense of Religion; and depend entirely upon the Fact's not being discovered, for the concealment of his Shame. Then, for *a Christian*; a man that Professes a pure, and more Holy Religion; a Religion that commands not only common Justice and Equity, but singular Love and Good-will towards our Neighbour; and requires not only Abstinence from the Unjust Things of the World, but also a Contempt and Indifference even for its innocent Enjoyments; for a man who professes *such a Religion*, to be guilty of a contrived and deliberate Fraud, which the

S E R M.

VIII.



Conscience even of a good *Heathen* would abhor; this is a *greater* Aggravation of the Crime. Further yet; to defraud *that* Stock, which was intended principally for the Support and Maintenance of the *Poor*, in a Time of great Trouble and Persecution; This was an additional Increase of his Guilt. And 'tis no inconsiderable Circumstance, that This was done at a Time when the whole Church were of *one heart and of one Mind*, with the utmost Simplicity and Sincerity of Manners; when there were no ill Examples to corrupt or seduce the Man, but every one contributed with the *utmost Chearfulness* to the Support of their Brethren; and with all readiness put all that they had, into the hands of the Apostles. Beyond All This; 'Tis observable that *Ananias*, excepting the Covetous Disposition of his *own* Mind, had *no Necessity, no Occasion, no Temptation* put upon him *from without*, to drive him into the projecting of such a Deceit. For this selling of their Estates, and laying them at the Apostle's Feet, was not a matter of *Compulsion*, but of *Free Choice*; not a Duty required of them of Necessity  
and

and by Constraint, but an Instance of vo- S E R M.  
luntary Liberality and of the most publick- VIII.  
spirited Charity. *Ananias* therefore could  
not alledge, that there was any Hardship,  
any Constraint put upon him in selling  
his Estate, which might tempt him to do  
it in a deceitful manner ; but the Whole  
being *voluntary*, his Transaction was from  
the beginning, originally, and in its whole  
Progress, without any Colour of Excuse,  
a deliberately-projected, wilful, and con-  
tinued Fraud. And this I conceive to be  
the meaning of *St Peter's Manner* of  
aggravating his Crime, by that severe re-  
proof and Appeal to his *own* Conscience  
in the Words of the Text ; *Whilst it re-*  
*maind, was it not thine own ? And after*  
*it was sold, was it not in thine own Power ?*  
*Why hast thou then conceived this thing in*  
*thine Heart ?* Lastly, There is still a far-  
ther Aggravation of his Crime, above all  
that has been yet said ; and That is, the  
*presumptuousness* of attempting to deceive  
those persons, whom he believed and knew  
to be inspired with the *Spirit of God* : the  
Holy Ghost having so lately descended  
upon them in that extraordinary and mi-  
raculous

S E R M. raculous manner at Pentecost. To lie to  
 VIII. the Apostles in This case, was lying to the  
 Holy Ghost, by whom the Apostles were  
 inspired; and lying to the Holy Ghost,  
 was in effect Lying to God himself, who  
 had given unto them his Holy Spirit. *Why  
 hath Satan filled thine Heart to lie to the  
 Holy Ghost?----Thou hast not lied unto Men,  
 but unto God?* The Word which we ren-  
 der, *lie to the Holy Ghost*, signifies pro-  
 perly, not only affirming an Untruth, or  
 denying a Promise, but, somewhat more  
 fully and emphatically, *deceiving, cheat-  
 ing, or imposing upon* a Person. By im-  
 posing upon the Apostles, *Ananias* attempted,  
 as much as in him lay, to deceive the  
 Holy Ghost; and deceiving the Holy Ghost,  
 is the very same thing, as undertaking  
 to impose upon God himself, who dwelt  
 in the Apostles by his Holy Spirit. The  
 Scripture frequently speaks in this manner:  
 1 Cor. vi. 19; *Your Body, saith St Paul,  
 is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is  
 in you, which ye have of God; i. e. which  
 God has given you: and 2 Cor. vi. 16; Ye  
 are the Temple of the Living God. In  
 the one place he calls them Temples of  
 the*



the *Holy Ghost*; in the *other* he calls them S E R M.  
 Temples of the *Living God*. The Reason of VIII.  
 these *two* different manners of speaking, is  
 expressed in *one*, Eph. ii. 21; ye are *an holy*  
*Temple in the Lord*,---*an habitation of God*,  
*thro' the Spirit*; and 1 Cor. iii. 16; *Ye are*  
*the Temple of God*;---for *the Spirit of God*  
*dwelleth in you*. *Ananias's* lying therefore  
 to the *Holy Ghost* which dwelt in the  
 Apostles, was the very same thing, as ly-  
 ing to God himself, who dwelt in the  
 Apostles by his *Holy Spirit*. And this  
 was the highest *Presumption*, and the most  
 daring Insolence in the World.

WHY hath Satan *filled thine Heart*?  
 The meaning of the Word, according to  
 the import of the *Hebrew* Idiom, is, Why  
 has Satan made thee so *presumptuous*? For  
 so we find the same Phrase to signify,  
*Esth.* vii. 5; *Where is he that durst pre-*  
*sume in his Heart to do so*? In the Mar-  
 gin 'tis literally, according to the Original,  
 where is he *whose Heart has filled*  
*him to do this Thing*? And *Eccles.* viii. 11;  
*Because Sentence against an Evil Work is*  
*not executed speedily, therefore the Hearts*  
*of the Sons of Men is fully set in them to*  
*do evil*; In the Original it is, *their Heart*  
*has*

S E R M. *has filled them, they are presumptuous, to*  
 VIII. *do evil.*



AND this likewise is the meaning of the following Words of St Peter to Sapphira, ver. 9; *How is it that ye have agreed together to Tempt the Spirit of the Lord?* The Word, *Tempt*, does not signify, as it sounds in the *English*, to *Try*, or to *make Tryal*, whether God *could* discover them or no; but, according to the *Hebrew* Language, and as 'tis very frequently used in the Old Testament, it signifies *presumptuously and with a high hand to provoke God*; as if Men meant to *Try* whether they were *stronger* than he, when they disobey him knowingly and with perfect choice. Thus Num. xiv. 22; *Because all those men which have seen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in Egypt and in the Wilderness, and have Tempted me now, i.e. have rebelled against me, these Ten times, and have not hearkened to my Voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their Fathers; neither shall any of them that provoked me, see it.* Here, That which is called *Tempting* of God, in the beginning of the Sentence; is at the

the latter End explained by the Word, S E R M.  
*provoked.* It may justly be wondered, how VIII.

a man that had seen the Apostles Miracles and the Power of the Holy Ghost, and had been just converted thereby to the Belief of the Gospel, could be so absurd as to hope to impose upon them by so gross a Fraud. But so it always is, that Sinners have Eyes and see not, and understandings and yet will not understand: And, as *Balaam* was so foolish, that when he found God would by no means permit *Israel* to be cursed, yet he would still persist, and go to Another Hill, and try if he could prevail to curse them from thence; so Wicked men will never be convinced that *God is not to be mocked*, 'till they perish finally in their incorrigible Presumption. The great Aggravation therefore of *Ananias's* Sin, was This presumptuous setting himself against the clearest Manifestation of God's Power and Glory in the Apostles. For, what our Saviour declared in general to his Disciples, that *he that despises you, despises me, and he that despises me, despises him that sent me*; was, in a more eminent and particular manner, true of

This

S E R M. This Person ; who, by lying to the *Apo-*  
 VIII. *stles* at a Time when he saw them evi-  
 ~~~~~  
 dently inspired, did in reality presume to
 lie to the *Holy Ghost* which inspired them ;
 and, by lying to the *Holy Ghost*, did con-
 sequently lie to *God* himself, whose Spirit
 he defied. And as his Crime was thus pe-
 culiarly great, so also accordingly was his
 Punishment. In which nevertheless, since
 others afterwards were not so punished,
 'tis reasonable to suppose, that the Ground
 of that particular Severity was This ; that,
 as at the first setting up the *Jewish* insti-
 tution, *Uzzah*, for but touching the Ark,
 was struck dead ; and *Achan*, for prefer-
 ving some of the Spoils of *Jericho*, was
 stoned to Death ; and the man who did
 but gather sticks upon the Sabbath-day,
 was by God's express Command to be
 put to Death ; So, at the beginning of
 the Gospel, the first Transgression was,
 for *Terror* and *Example's* sake, punished
 with a singular and peculiar Temporal
 Severity.

III. IT remains in *the Third* and last
 place, that I proceed to draw some useful and
 practical

practical Observations, from the several S E R M.
Expressions contained in the Text. And VIII.

1st, FROM hence we may learn how great a Crime, *Deliberate Fraud* is, which God in this Case of *Ananias*, was pleased to punish with so very exemplary and remarkable a Punishment.

2^{dly}, WE may observe in the Text, that the Scripture ascribes *all* great Sins to the Influence of the *Devil*; Why has *Satan* filled thine Heart? The *Devil*, is the Head of Apostacy and Rebellion against God: And therefore, as all *Good* is ascribed to *God*, because 'tis an imitation of his Nature, is performed by his Assistance, and is agreeable to his Will: so all *Evil* is ascribed to the *Devil*; because 'tis a following of his Example, 'tis performed at his instigation, and is agreeable to his Desires. 1 *Joh.* iii. 8; *He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning; ----whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin; ----In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil.* Hence 'tis said, that *Satan* provoked David to number Israel; that *Satan* taketh away the Word sown in mens

Hearts; 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Mar. iv. 15. 1 Pet. v. 8. Ephes. vi. 12.

192. *Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud.*

S E R M. *Hearts; that our Adversary the Devil,*
 VIII. *as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking*
 ~~~~~ *whom he may devour; and that we wrestle a-*  
*gainst Principalities, against Powers, against*  
*the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World,*  
*againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places.*  
*Nay even all Natural Evils alſo, for the ſame*  
*reaſon are in Scripture ſometimes aſcribed*  
*to the Devil; becauſe he is the great Pro-*  
*moter, the Head, the Deſigner and the*  
*Lover of Evil. Thus, concerning the*  
*Woman that was bowed together, St Luc.*  
 Luc. xiii. *xiii. 11; 'tis ſaid that Satan had bound her*  
 16 *theſe eighteen years; Likewise, that Satan*  
 1 Th. ii. *hindred St Paul from coming unto the*  
 18 *Thellalonians; that an affliction ſent him*  
 Rom. i. *in the Fleſh, was the Meſſenger of Satan*  
 13, 15, 22. *to buffet him; and that the Devil ſhould*  
 2 Cor. xii. *caſt ſome of the Saints into Priſon.*  
 7.  
 Rev. ii.   
 10.

3dly; 'Tis obſervable in the Text, that  
 the Scripture's aſcribing all great Sins to  
 the Influence of the Devil, is not by way  
 of *Excuse*, but always on the contrary an  
*Aggravation.* *Ananias, Why hath Satan*  
*filled thine Heart?* 'Twas not any Exte-  
 nuation, but the *Greatneſs* of his Fault,  
 that he ſuffered Satan to fill his Heart.

Indeed,




Indeed, where either the Devil or Man S E R M.  
 find means to *deceive* a Person, and lead VIII.  
 him really into *Error*; there the *Error*,  
 or the being *deceived*, must and ought to  
 be looked upon as some Alleviation of the  
 Fault: But where the Crime is *plain*, and  
 there is no room for Error of the *judg-*  
*ment*, as in the Case of *deliberate Fraud*;  
 there the being tempted by the *Devil*, is  
 no more an Excuse, than the being tempt-  
 ed by the *Profit* or the *Gain* of the Sin;  
 Because, in such Case, the Temptation  
 of the Devil is in reality nothing more,  
 but his laying before a Man the Gainful-  
 ness of the Sin: And the Person's being  
 prevailed upon by That Temptation, is  
 so far from being an Excuse, that 'tis in-  
 deed the very Essence and formal Nature  
 of the Crime; his *consenting to yield* to  
 that Temptation, which could have had  
 no Power over him but by his own Con-  
 sent. This is the *very* thing, which 'tis  
 the proper Business of a Christian to over-  
 come. And as 'tis his Duty always to *grow*  
*in grace*, and to take heed not to *resist*  
*and grieve the Holy Spirit*; so likewise  
 on the contrary 'tis his Duty, to *resist the*  
 VOL. X. O Devil;

194 *Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud.*

S E R M. *Devil*; And 'tis in his *Power* to do so,  
 VIII. for he shall *flee from him*; nor can any  
 Eph. iv. man be made to sin, but *when he is drawn*  
 27. away of his own *Lust*, and enticed. For  
 James iv. so the Scripture always speaks; declaring  
 7. i. 14. even concerning *Judas*, that 'twas through  
 his own *Covetousness* that the *Devil* entred  
 into him, and put it into his *Heart* to  
 betray his Master; and concerning the  
 1 Cor. vii. *Corinthians*, that *Satan* could not tempt  
 5. them, but through *their own incontinency*;  
 Even in like manner as *St Peter* in the  
 Text reproves *Ananias*, Why hath *Satan*  
 filled thine *Heart*?

4thly, and lastly; FROM what has been  
 said in explication of *These Words*; whilst  
 it remained, was it not thine own? And  
 after it was sold, was it not in thine own  
*Power*? it appears that *Ananias* was not,  
 as has been generally supposed, under any  
*Vow*; Neither is there in This, or in any  
 Other Passage in the whole New Testament,  
 any mention of any Christians making any  
*Vows at all*. In the Old Testament, among  
 other legal Rites and Customs, there is  
 Acts xviii. indeed frequent mention of *Vows*; and in  
 18, 21, 23. the History of the *Acts* of the Apostles,  
 there

there is an Account of certain *Jews* that S E R M.  
lay under *Vows*; and of Converts that lay VIII.  
under Vows made before their conversion. 

For when they *are* made, the Matter of them not being unlawful, they are of Necessity to be kept; *For God hath no pleasure in Fools; Pay that which thou hast vowed*; Eccles. v. 4, 5. But even under the Law itself in the *Jewish* State, there was no Necessity of *making* them; *For if thou shalt forbear to Vow, it shall be no Sin in thee*; Deut. xxiii. 22. And under the Gospel, there is not only no precept, but even not so much as any one Example of any such Thing in the whole New Testament. Baptism indeed and the Lord's Supper, are solemn *Vows* of Obedience towards God; But the Matter of them is such, as was, *before*, our indispensable Duty; And such solemn renewing our Holy Resolutions of doing what is of absolute *Necessity* to be done, is undoubtedly of great and perpetual Use. But in other Cases, Vows are at best nothing but needless Snares upon Men; and generally, (as, in the Church of *Rome* their Vows of *Single Life*, of *perpetual Poverty*, and the like) generally, I say, they are of superstitious


S E R M. and unwarrantable Practice. The Young  
 VIII. man in the Gospel, who not content with  
 being told that by keeping the Command-  
 ments he should live, would needs recom-  
 mend himself by putting our Saviour up-  
 on requiring more of him; departed  
 wholly from Christ through his own need-  
 less importunity; and may well be a warn-  
 ing against aiming at Works of Supere-  
 rogation. What is fit to be done, may  
 be done without laying upon ourselves un-  
 necessary Obligations; and such Obliga-  
 tions can be of no Benefit, but needlessly  
 to involve men in Snares and Scruples.  
 Even in the Old Testament itself, except-  
 ing, as I said, some particulars in matters  
 of *Legal* performance; 'tis observable that  
 the *Vows* we most frequently read of, were  
 not such as the Word now generally sig-  
 nifies, but only *solemn Resolutions* of uni-  
 versal Obedience. *Jacob's Vow*, Gen.  
 xxviii. 20; *If God will be with me, and  
 keep me in the way that I go, ---- then  
 shall the Lord be my God*; was nothing  
 more but a devout Prayer, that *God* would  
 be pleased to preserve *him*, that *he* might  
 glorify *God* by professing the true Re-  
 I  
 ligion

ligion in the midst of Idolatrous Nations. S E R M.

The same is the meaning of the peoples VIII.

Vow, Num. xxi. 2; *Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then will I utterly destroy their Cities, i. e. have no friendship with the Idolaters. And that of Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 8; If the Lord shall bring me again indeed---, then I will serve the Lord. And to the same purpose of holy Resolutions of Obedience only, are those frequent Expressions, Is. xix. 21; In that Day the Egyptians shall know the Lord;---yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it: And, the men feared the Lord,---and made Vows; Jonah i. 16; ii. 9. And Ps. l. 14; Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High: lvi. 12; Thy Vows are upon me, O God; I will render Praises unto thee: lxi. 5, 8; Thou, O God, hast heard my Vows; thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy Name; So will I sing praise unto thy Name for ever, that I may daily perform my Vows: And Ps. cxvi. 13; I will receive the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord;*

198      *Of the Sin of deliberate Fraud.*

S E R M. *I will pay my Vows unto the Lord, now*  
 VIII. *in the presence of all his People.* In these,  
 I say, and many other places; the Word  
*Vow*, signifies nothing more, but *solemn*  
*Resolutions of universal Obedience.* From  
 the right understanding of all which pas-  
 sages in the *Old Testament*, and the want  
 of any mention of any Vows at all in the  
*New*; 'tis very apparent what is the best  
 direction to be given to *Christians* concern-  
 ing that matter; even never to intangle  
 themselves in any other obligations at  
 all, but only take care to *keep* those sacred  
 Vows and Resolutions, which they solemn-  
 ly enter into at *Baptism*, and the *Supper*  
*of the Lord.*

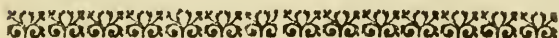
S E R M O N





# S E R M O N IX.

Of the Heinoufness of the Sin of  
wilful Murder.



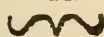
E X O D. xxi. 14.

*But if a man come presumptuously upon his  
neighbour, to slay him with guile ; thou  
shalt take him from mine altar, that he  
may die.*



S every Thing that God has  
created, is good ; and nothing  
becomes *Evil*, but by some  
Corruption or Abuse : So e-  
very natural *Action* is in it-  
self *innocent*, and becomes *immoral* merely  
from the *Circumstances* that attend it, or  
from the *intention* that produces it. *Ta-*  
king

S E R M.  
IX.



S E R M. *king away the Life of a Man*, is an Act  
 IX. absolutely, and in the nature of the thing  
 ~~~~~ itself, neither good nor evil. In *some* cases  
 and circumstances 'tis *just*, 'tis *righteous*,
 'tis *praise-worthy*, according to the Laws
 both of God and Nature. In *other* cases,
 'tis one of the greatest of *All Crimes*, and
 least likely to find Pardon either with *God*
 or *Men*. The explication of this *One In-*
stance in its full extent, may be useful not
 only with regard to the *Particular* un-
 der consideration; but *in general* also it
 may proportionably be instructive, as set-
 ting forth the nature of Morality and Im-
 morality in most *other* Instances whatso-
 ever. The *Law itself* is thus express'd,
ver. 12; He that smiteth a man, so that he
die, shall surely be put to death. Yet to
 shew wherein the *Crime*, wherein the
Immorality consists, there follows in the
 very next words a Distinct Explication,
ver. 13; If a man lie not in wait, but
God deliver him into his hand, then I will
appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.
But if a man come presumptuously upon
his Neighbour, to slay him with Guile;
thou shalt take him from mine Altar, that
 he

he may die. The *Essence* of All Sin, lies S E R M.
IX.
in the *presuming* to transgress. Men know in their own conscience, that such or such an action *ought not* to be done; and yet they *presumptuously* take upon them to do it. This is what justly provokes the Anger of God; and according to the degree of the *presumption*, is the degree of the *Offence*. This is universally the case, in *All kinds* of Sin; and the reason of the *General Doctrine* will most clearly appear, by considering it in the Case of so remarkable a *Particular*, as is the Instance of *taking away the Life of Man*. Now a man's life may be taken away,

1st, By *Chance*; without *any* evil intention *at all*, in Him that does it. And where This is *truly* and *perfectly* the Case, there is *No Crime* or Offence committed. For the nature of every action, with regard to Good or Evil, is determined by the Intention; and where there is no Intention, there can be no Morality nor Immorality in the Action. The Meaning of which is, not that the want of evil intention will excuse an action intrinsically Evil in its own nature; (For in things

S E R M. things *intrinsically* and *unalterably* wicked
 IX. in their own nature, no man's conscience
 can be *innocently* deceived;) But the Meaning is, that where there is no intention of doing the Action *at all*, (as in the present Case,) there the Effect is not indeed (properly speaking) the Action of the Moral and Intelligent Agent. The case is put, *Deut. xix. v; As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the Ax to cut down the Tree, and the Head slippeth from the Helve, and lighteth upon his Neighbour that he die.* Nevertheless, even in *This* case, where there is *no intention at all* of the Event that comes to pass; there may yet be, in *another* respect, *some degree of Faultiness* for want of Care. For one man ought not to suffer, through Another's *Heedlessness* or *Negligence*. And therefore all *reasonable precaution* to prevent even *accidental* Evils, is a Duty of real moral Obligation. Upon which Account God was pleased to appoint under *the Law*, that whosoever had the misfortune to slay a man by Chance, should be obliged to the Trouble of fleeing unto a
 City

City of Refuge. The observation naturally arising from which commandment, is, that 'tis a *general Duty* in all cases, not only to forbear every evil Act, which is of *malicious intention*; but to be careful moreover to avoid, as far as our short Foresight can extend, whatever may *accidentally* be the Occasion even of an *undesign'd* Evil. Not that any man is at any time to forbear doing a *plain Duty*, because *other men* may from thence take an *Occasion* of doing *evil*: (For then the Gospel itself ought never to have been preach'd, because wicked men make it an occasion of bringing in a *Sword* instead of *Peace upon Earth* :) But in all cases where *Truth* and *Right* are *not* concerned, it is the Duty of a Christian in all his Actions to have regard to the probabilities even of *accidental* ill Consequences.

2dly; THE Life of a man may be taken away, in necessary and unavoidable *Self-defence*. In which case, not he that *takes away*, but he that *loses* his life, is guilty of the Transgression. For in all *moral* estimation of things, 'tis an universal Rule; that, *not* always He who

perhaps

S E R M. perhaps *does* the action, but He always
 IX. who is the real and *criminal cause* of it,
 is answerable for the Evil. *Contentions, Animosities, and Divisions* among Christians, are very great and pernicious immoralities: Yet not always He who *divides*, (as in the case of Protestants separating from the Church of *Rome*;) but He who *causes* the division, and makes it *necessary*, and by *whose Fault* it is that the *Offence cometh*, He only is truly answerable for the Crime. And the same holds true, even where *Life itself* is concerned. *Exod. xxii. 2*; *If a Thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no Blood be shed for him.* In like manner, where men fall by the Hand of *Justice*, for capital Crimes; not the *Magistrate*, nor the *Executioner*, but the *Criminal himself* is guilty of his own Blood. And, in all just and necessary *Wars*; not they who *slay* the Enemy, but they who by *Tyranny and Oppression*, by unsatiable *Avarice*, by *Ambition and Pride*, are stirred up to ravage and destroy the World; upon These comes the Blood of Thousands and of Ten thousands, and of all that are slain upon the Earth.

FROM

FROM these and the like Instances it S E R M. clearly appears, why the word, *presump-* IX.
tuously, is added in the Text. 'Tis in
This, as in all other Cases, not the *bare*
material Action, but the *Circumstances of*
the Intention, on which depends the Mo-
 rality or Immorality of what is done. Not
 always He, who *takes away the Life of a*
man, is a *Murderer*; But *if a man come*
Presumptuously upon his Neighbour to slay
him with guile, Him (says God in the
 Text) *shalt thou take from mine Altar,*
that he may die.

IT may well be thought, that, in a
Christian Congregation, there can be no
 great need of enlarging upon a Crime,
 which at first sight startles every man's
natural conscience. But as, in all other
 Instances of Wickedness, there are very
 many degrees, between being guilty of
 the highest or most capital Crime, and
 preserving the Habit of that contrary Vir-
 tue, to which the Prohibition was intend-
 ed to be a Guard or Fence; so, in the *pre-*
sent Particular, there are many Degrees,
 between being guilty of the presumptuous
 Murder condemned in the Text, and
 main-

S E R M. maintaining on the contrary That Habit
 IX. of Charity, of mutual Love and Good
 Will, of universal Benevolence and Care
 for each other's Benefit, which the Com-
 mand, *Thou shalt not kill*, was, in its full
 extent, intended to secure. Thus *our Sa-
 viour himself* explains the matter; *Matt.*
v. 21; *Ye have heard that it was said by*
them of old Time, Thou shalt not kill; and
whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of
the judgment: (That is, The Jewish Ca-
 suits confined the Command of God to
 its most limited and restrained sense :) *But*
I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with
his Brother without a cause, shall be in
danger of the judgment; And whosoever
shall say to his Brother, Raca, shall be in
danger of the Council; But whosoever shall
say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell-
fire. His Meaning is; that, proportionable
 to the *degree* of the *Offence*, shall be the
 nature and kind of the *Punishment*.

Now of *all* crimes that a man is
 capable of committing, that which is
 condemned in the *primary* and *literal*
 sense of the *Text*, is the most enormous;
 because 'tis, in the nature of the thing,
 irre-

irreparable; and which no after-act can S E R M.
make any Amends for. For, what recom- IX.
pence can be given a man in exchange

for his Life? Or what satisfaction can *He* make for destroying the *Image of God*, who, far from restoring life, is not able to *make one Hair white or black*, or to *add One Cubit unto his Stature*? By the Law of *Nature* therefore, this Crime was always pursued with the most extreme vengeance: Which made the *Barbarians* to judge, *Acts xxviii. 4*, when they saw *St Paul* upon the point, as they thought, of dying a sudden and unnatural Death: *No doubt this man is a Murderer, whom, though he has escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live.* By the Laws of all civilized Nations in all parts of the World, it has always been punished with Death. And by the Law of *God himself*, it is of All Offences declared to be the most unpardonable. (*Gen. ix. 5*; and *Num. xxxv. 31*;) *At the hand of every man's Brother, will I require the life of Man: Whoso sheddeth man's Blood, by man shall his Blood be shed. Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a Murderer:---*
be

SERM. *he shall surely be put to Death.---* So ye
 IX. *shall not pollute the Land wherein ye are :
 For blood defileth the Land ; and the Land
 cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed
 therein, but by the Blood of him that shed
 it. For which reason 'tis recorded in the
 History of Manasseh with particular em-
 phasis, 2 Kings xxiv. 4 ; xxi. 16 ; that
 He filled Jerusalem with Blood from one
 end to the other, which the Lord would not
 pardon. And in the words of the Text,
 peculiar directions are given, that whoso-
 ever is guilty of innocent blood, should
 upon no account be suffered to escape :
 Thou shalt take him from mine Altar, that
 he may die.*

It has been a very ancient imagination
 in persons guilty of the most crying Im-
 moralities, that the Regard men are apt
 to have for the relative Sacredness of Places
 dedicated to the most solemn part of God's
 Worship, should be a sort of Refuge to
 them, and Protection from Justice. Thus
 we read, 1 Kings ii. 28, that Joab (who
 had fallen upon two men more righteous and
 better than himself, and had slain them
 with the Sword, ver. 32 ;) fled unto the
 Taber-

Tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold S E R M.
on the Horns of the Altar. But, even IX.
 under the *Jewish* dispensation, (where
God himself had appointed the very minute-
 st Forms and Ceremonies of their Religion,
 and had laid great Stress even upon the
 nicest Particularities in the manner of
 Consecrating either Persons or Things or
 Places, as being *Types* and *Representations*
 of things spiritual and heavenly: Even
 under the *Jewish* dispensation *itself*, I say,) God
 was pleased, where-ever *real* *Virtue* and
Morality were concerned, expressly to
 declare, as in *the Text*, that no point of
 external and ceremonious institution, should
 in any wise interfere with matters of
 Eternal Justice, Righteousness, and Truth;
 and that no pretence of outward appointment
 in matters of Religion, no Sacredness of
 Place or Thing, no Worship or Sacrifice at
 His Altar, should upon any account be a
Cover or *Protection* to any Vice or
 Immorality whatsoever. How much more
 absurd therefore is it under the *Christian*
 dispensation, (which, in its whole nature
 and design, is the accomplishment of all
 types and figures in

S E R M. the Practice of real and intrinſick Virtue
 IX. and Holineſs ; How much more abſurd is
 it *Here*,) to ſet up, as the Church of
Rome has done in innumerable Inſtances,
 Superſtitious Obſervances preferably to
 moral Virtue, and, particularly, to va-
 lue themſelves upon the *Immunities* (as
 they call them) granted to religious
 Places ; by which, under pretence of be-
 ing dedicated in a more ſacred manner to
 the Service of God, they are very often
 made in a great degree a Protection to
 Criminals of the Hiſheſt kind, not ex-
 cepting even *Murderers* themſelves ! But
 to proceed.

W H A T Scripture and Nature and Rea-
 ſon teach, concerning the Crime of at-
 tempting *another man's* life ; is applicable
 in proportion to the Folly of a man's de-
 liberately, and upon Diſcontent with Pro-
 vidence, bereaving himſelf of his *own*
 life. For as no man knows all the Ends
 and Deſigns, for which the Divine Pro-
 vidence appointed him his Station, what-
 ſoever it be, in this preſent World ; ſo
 no man has a Right to remove himſelf
 therefrom ; to anticipate the Time of
 God's

God's calling him to Judgment, or to de-
 prive the Publick of a Member. There is
 no need to add any thing more upon This
 Head, than the words of a wise Philoso-
 pher among the Heathens. *All pious men,*
 says he, *ought to have patience to remain*
in the Body, so long as God, whose Temple
and Palace this whole World is, shall please
to continue them there; and not force them-
selves out of the World, before he calls for
them; least they be found Deserters of the
Station appointed them of God.

THESE are Crimes of a very High
 Nature; I wish I could also add, altoge-
 ther *unexampled*. But 'tis further to be
 observed, as I have already intimated;
 that, in the case before us, as in almost
 all *other* Instances of Wickedness; between
 being guilty of the presumptuous Sin con-
 demned in the Text, and maintaining on
 the contrary That Habit of Charity, of
 mutual Love and Good Will, of universal
 Benevolence and Care for each other's Be-
 nefit, which the Commandment, to which
 my Text has reference, was, in its full
 extent, intended to secure: between These
 two things, I say, there are very many

S E R M. Degrees, in which the Command given in
 IX. the *Law*, as explained by our Saviour in
 the *Gospel*, (in his Sermon upon the Mount,) may in different manners be transgressed. As


1st; IN many civilized Nations, and Nations which at the same time profess Christianity too; from a wrong notion of *Honour*, not regulated by the Limits of true Virtue, there has prevailed a Custom, unknown in ancient times to virtuous nations, even who had not received the Light of the Gospel; a Custom for men of unsuspected Courage and Greatness of mind, men useful to their Country in Posts of the greatest Consequence, and capable of the noblest Actions, needlessly to expose their Lives, on a sudden Transport of Passion, in vindication frequently of a very small Affront, or sometimes perhaps even of a Mistake only. A matter wherein *Human Laws*, and the Execution of Justice among *Men*, have oft-times been very apt to incline to the favourable side; where the Laws of *God*, and the Reason of the *thing itself*, seem not to have left Any room for such Allowances. For if (as I
 before

before observed) God was pleased to appoint under *the Law*, that whosoever had the misfortune to slay a man by Chance, without Any sort of ill intention at all, should be obliged to the Trouble of fleeing to a *City of Refuge*; that every degree even of *Negligence, Heedlessness*, or want of *Care*, whereby our Neighbour might possibly receive Damage, might (as far as possible) be prevented: How much *more* reasonable is it, that Transports of *Passion* and even of the most *sudden* Provocation, should not be allowed in excuse of an irreparable Damage! a Damage, not only irreparable in *This World*, but of unspeakable ill consequence with regard also to that which is *to come*; For persons in these Circumstances generally leave the World, without any real *Forgiveness* of *each other*, and without any possibility of effectual *Repentance and Amendment* towards God.

2dly; THE Laws of God, relating to the Life of our Neighbour; taking them according to their real Design, and in their true Extent; are transgressed by all real *Mischiefs and Injuries* whatsoever, done by

S E R M. One man to *Another*, or brought by any
 IX. man, through the means of any unlawful
 ~~~~~ Action, consequentially upon *Himself*. They  
 are transgressed by All *Debaucheries*,  
 whereby men destroy *Themselves*; or which  
 they draw *Others* into, to the Ruin of the  
*Health* of their *Bodies*, and the *Reason* of  
 their *Minds*. They are transgressed by all  
 wilful *Frauds*, and deliberate *Adultera-*  
*tions*, of things made use of either in *Food*  
 or *Medicines*; and, in a word, by *every*  
 thing, (*out of the way* of a man's plain  
 Duty,) in consequence whereof any man  
 receives detriment in his Person. Nor is  
 it, in any of these cases, a sufficient Ex-  
 cuse, in point of morality, to alledge, that  
 the Evil which follows, was not *intended*.  
 For, though no man is answerable for  
 any accidental ill Consequences, which he  
 may possibly be the occasion of in the  
 Performance of his *Duty*; yet whenever  
 any man does any *unlawful* Action, he is  
 undoubtedly *answerable*, (in different *de-*  
*grees* indeed, according to different Cir-  
 cumstances; but *answerable* certainly he  
 is,) not only for the Evil he *directly in-*  
*tended*, but also for the *accidental* ill Con-  
 sequences

sequences of That Action, which it was S E R M.  
his direct Duty *not* to have performed. IX.

3dly and *Lastly*; THE Precept of   
the *old Law* referred to in my Text, as  
explained in the *Gospel-sense* by our Savi-  
our in his Sermon upon the Mount; is  
transgressed by all *Wrath, Malice, Strife,*  
*Contentiousness,* and *Hatred* towards our  
Brethren. 1 *Joh.* iii. 15; *Whoſoever ha-*  
*teth his Brother, is a Murderer; and ye*  
*know that no Murderer hath eternal Life*  
*abiding in him.* The Ground of the A-  
postles expreſſing himſelf after this man-  
ner, is; not only becauſe the Beginnings  
of wrath and animoſities, in event often  
extend to great and unforeſeen Effects; as  
*Cain's* cauſeleſs Anger againſt his Brother,  
which the Apoſtle alludes to in the fore-  
going verſes, ended at length in taking a-  
way his Life; But alſo becauſe, in the very  
nature of the thing, all Hatred and Ma-  
lice, all Contentiouſneſs and Animoſity, is  
in it itſelf unchriſtian, and is the Spirit of  
the *Devil*, who was *a Murderer from the*  
*Beginning.* For which reaſon our Saviour,  
in the *place before referred to*, explaining  
the Ancient Law upon this head, enlarges

S E R M. it Thus. *Ye have heard that it was said*  
 IX. *by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill :*

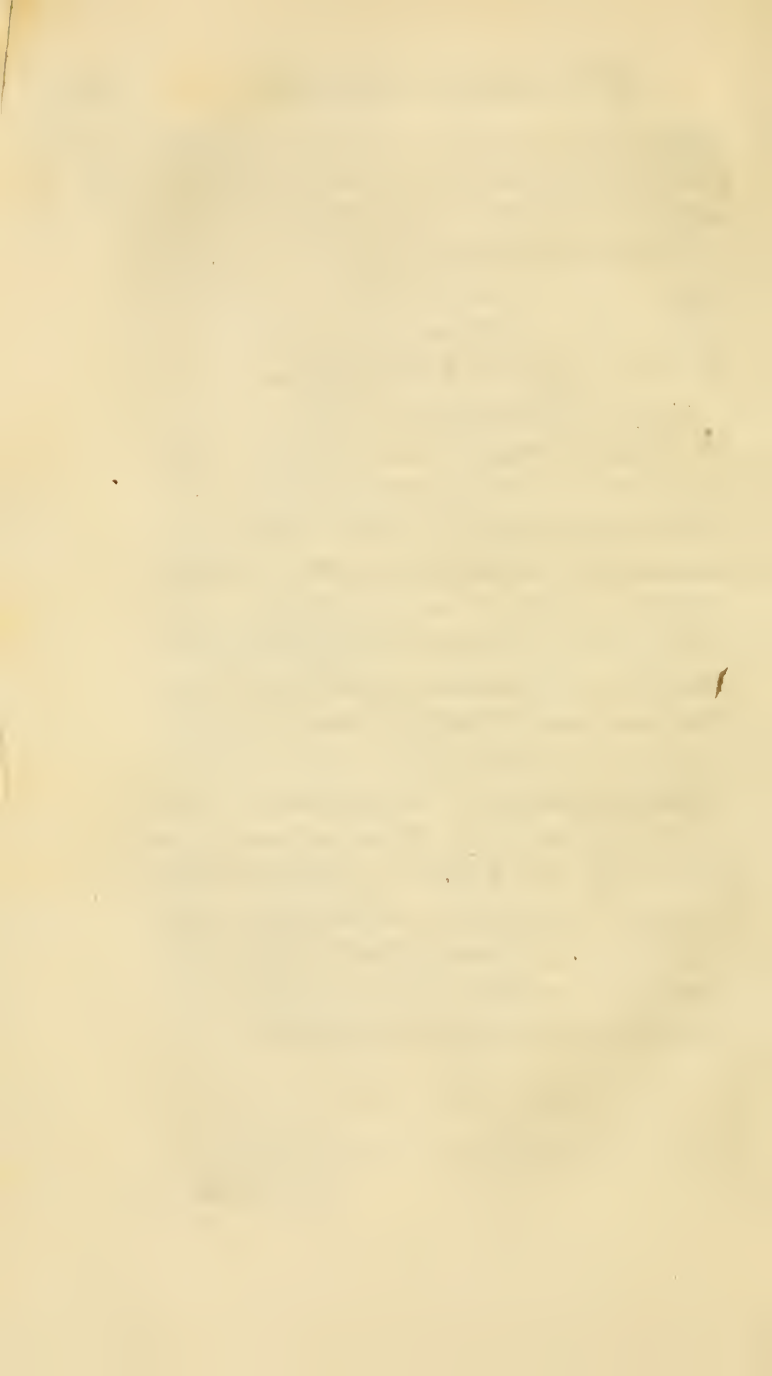
---But I say unto you, *Whosoever is Angry with his Brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment ; And whosoever shall say to his Brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the Council ; But whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell-fire.* The words are an allusion to

three different degrees of Punishment, in three several Courts of Judicature among the *Jews*. And the Sense of them is, that every degree of *Hatred, Malice, and Uncharitableness* towards our Brethren, shall finally receive from God a proportionable Punishment, a Punishment proportionable to each degree of the Offence ; whereas the *Old Law* (according to the *Jews* interpretation of it,) extended not to these things at all, but forbad only *Murder* and outward Injuries. *Whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell-Fire :* The Meaning is ; not that, in the strict and literal sense, every such rash and passionate expression shall be punished with eternal damnation : (For who then should be saved ?) But that at the exact Account  
 in



in the judgment of the Great Day, every S E R M.  
*Word* and *Work*, nay, every secret *Thought*  
and *Intent* of the *Heart*, shall have its IX.  
just *Estimation* and *Weight*, in determi-  
ning the *degrees* of *Happiness* or *Punish-*  
*ment*, which shall be assigned to every  
man in his final and eternal State.

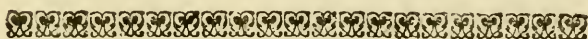
DID men frequently and seriously con-  
sider these things as they ought ; there  
would not be found among Christians such  
Strifes and Contentions, such Hatred and  
Animosities, such Violence and Unchari-  
tableness, as there is ; altogether incon-  
sistent with that Meekness and *Love*, which  
the Apostle declares to be *the Fulfilling of*  
*the Law* ; and directly contrary to That  
Spirit of universal Benevolence, Good  
Will, and mutual Forbearance, which  
the Scripture every where represents as  
of much greater Value in the Sight of God,  
than all the Sacrifices offered up to him  
upon his Altar in the *Jewish State*, and  
than all the external Worship paid to him  
even in the *Christian Church* itself.





# S E R M O N X.

Of the several Sorts of Hypoc-  
rify.



J O B xiii. 16.

*He also shall be my Salvation, for an  
Hypocrite shall not come before him.*



THE occasion of these Words, S E R M. X.  
was Job's Friends urging a-  
gainst him, that because God  
had grievously afflicted him,  
therefore he must needs have  
been a very wicked man. To this, Job  
constantly replies, by maintaining his own  
Innocency; and insisting, that God the  
supreme Governour of all things, afflicted  
him for *other* Reasons according to his  
own

S E R M. own good pleasure, and not for any wickedness or unrighteousness found in *Job*,  
 X. *ch. xxvii. 5; 'Till I die I will not remove my Integrity from me: My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my Heart shall not reproach me so long as I live: For what is the Hope of the Hypocrite, when God taketh away his Soul?* The meaning of which Defence of himself, was not that he claimed to be entirely *without Sin*; For, on the contrary, when he speaks in *This* Sense, of being Sinless towards God, he expresses himself in a quite different manner; *If I justify my self*, saith he, *my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse;* *ch. ix. 20.* But with regard to great Crimes, such Wickedness as his Friends collected, from his state of Adversity, that he must needs have been guilty of; from *these* he constantly clears himself with the greatest Steadiness; and proves that they argued very wrongfully for God, when they supposed that God could no otherwise be justified in afflicting *Job*, than by *Job's* having been a very wicked man.

*ver.*


ver. 7. of this xiiiith chapter; *Will you* S E R M.  
*speak wickedly, saith he, for God; and* X.  
*talk deceitfully for Him? Will ye accept*  
*his Person? Will ye contend for God?*  
*Though he slay me, (ver. 15,) yet will I trust*  
*in him; but I will maintain my own ways*  
*before him: That is, Though he afflict*  
*me to Death, yet will I trust that he does*  
*not expect from me a false confession, or*  
*that I should endeavour to justify his Pro-*  
*ceedings by any wrong Supposition. And*  
*then he adds in the words of the Text;*  
*He also shall be my Salvation, for an Hy-*  
*pocrite shall not come before him: That is,*  
*I know that after all this, he will at length*  
*deliver me; and will in the End distinguish*  
*his faithful Servant, from the Destruction*  
*of a Hypocrite.*

THE word *Hypocrite*, is here plainly  
 used in opposition to such a sincere per-  
 son as can *maintain his own ways before*  
*God*; so *Job* expresses it: Or, in St *John's*  
 phrase, to such a good man, who, because  
*his own Heart condemneth him not, has*  
*therefore Confidence towards God.* In which  
 matter, because there is oftentimes very  
 great Deceit; and frequently very ill men  
 think

S E R M. think themselves *not to be Hypocrites*, because they are not so in the grossest and most literal Sense of the word; I shall therefore in the following Discourse endeavour to set this matter in a clear Light, and point forth distinctly the several sorts of men, which are in Scripture charged with the Denomination of *Hypocrites*. The Use of which Discourse will be, that we may learn, *not* to judge our *Neighbours*, whose Hearts we cannot discern; any further than they open themselves by manifest Actions: But that every man may seriously examine his *own* Heart by the Rule of Scripture, and find whether there be not often in it *more* of what the Scripture styles *Hypocrisy*; than careless persons are apt to be aware of.

I. *First* then; T H E *greatest* and *highest* degree of *Hypocrisy*, is when men, with a formed Design and deliberate Intention, endeavour under a Pretence of Religion and an Appearance of serving God, to carry on worldly and corrupt Ends. Of *This* sort, were those whom our Saviour describes, *Mat. xxiii. 14; Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; For ye devour*



devour widows Houses, and for a pretence S E R M.  
make long Prayers; therefore ye shall re- X.  
ceive the greater damnation. And ver. 27; 

*Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited Sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness; Even so Ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. The Words next following to which, have in the manner of expression, a difficulty which deserves particular explication: Ver. 29; Wo unto you, says our Saviour, because ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the righteous; And say, if we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets: Wherefore ye are witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets. The same words, as recorded by St Luke, are still more remarkable, ch. xi. 47; Wo unto you; for ye build the Sepulchres of the Prophets, and your Fathers killed them; Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds*

S E R M. *deeds of your Fathers; for They indeed*  
 X. *killed them, and Ye build their Sepulchres.*

The Question here is, *how* our Saviour pronounces a Wo against these Pharisees, *for* building the Sepulchres of the Prophets; and *how* he infers, that they *allowed* the deeds of their Fathers, by that *very* action whereby they professed to *disclaim* and *disallow* them. Now in order to explain This difficulty, 'tis needful only to observe, that in *some* languages, and in That of the *Jews* particularly, 'tis both usual and elegant to suppress *part* of the proposition, which yet by necessary inference is always plainly understood. Thus *Rom. vi. 17; God be thanked*, saith St Paul, that ye were *the Servants of Sin*; but ye have obeyed the doctrine that was delivered you. His meaning plainly is; *God be thanked*, that, *notwithstanding* your strong *Prejudices* against the Gospel, by having been formerly *habitual Sinners*, yet *at length* ye were convinced and embraced the Truth. In like manner *here*, the Pharisees well understood the force of our Saviour's reproof, and that his intention was This, to declare that *notwithstanding*

their professing to disclaim the Deeds of S E R M.  
 their Fathers who killed the Prophets, yet X.  
 in reality they were as truly in the *moral*  
*sense* the children of these men by *Likeness*  
*and Imitation of Manners*, as they acknow-  
 ledged themselves to be descended from  
 them by *natural Birth*; and that, *not-*  
*withstanding* their pretending to show great  
 Respect for the Memory of the Ancient  
 Prophets, by building and adorning their  
 Tombs; yet in reality this Respect was  
 only shown to those Prophets because they  
 were *Dead*, and could no longer reprove  
 and shame them for their Vices; whereas  
 the *Living Prophets* were *persecuted* by  
*them*, just as the *Ancient Ones* had been  
 by their *Fore-fathers*. These men there-  
 fore were guilty of the *first* and *highest*  
 degree of *hypocrisy*, carrying on wicked  
 designs deliberately under the pretence of  
 Religion.

OF the same kind were Those in the  
 xvth of St Matthew, ver. 1; who after  
 our Saviour had in their presence worked  
 many Miracles upon *Earth*, perversely  
 and impertinently (as if the *Place* were of  
 more moment than the *Greatness* of the  
 VOL. X. Q Work)

S E R M. Work) urged him to *show them likewise*  
 X. some Miracle *in the Heavens*. To whom  
 he replies, *ver. 3, with suitable Sharp-*  
*ness; O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the*  
*Face of the Sky, but can ye not discern the*  
*Signs of the Times?*

UNDER the same denomination also, come Those mentioned in the *xxi<sup>id</sup> ch.* of the same Gospel, at the *17<sup>th</sup> verse*; who asked our Saviour, *Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?* meaning to accuse him as a *Betrayer of the Liberty of the Jews*, if he should say it *was* lawful; or, on the contrary, as a *mover of Sedition against the Romans*, if he should say it *was not* lawful. To whom therefore he accordingly replies with a deserved Sharpness, *ver. 18, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?*

*Lastly*; UNDER the same rank and character, (of hypocrites of the *worst* sort, *such* as have *no manner* of Regard either to *God* or to *True Virtue* in all their Pretences to Religion;) under *This* rank, I say, may justly be placed Those Pharisees, against whose Practices our Saviour warns his Disciples, *St Matt. vi; 2, 5,*  
 16;

16; *When thou dost thine alms, do not* S E R M.  
*sound a Trumpet before thee, as the hy-* X.  
*pocrites do, in the Synagogues and in the*  
*Streets, that they may have Glory of Men.*  
*And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be*  
*as the Hypocrites are; for they love to*  
*pray standing in the Synagogues, and in*  
*the Corners of the Streets, that they may*  
*be seen of Men. And when ye fast, be*  
*not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance;*  
*for they disfigure their faces, that they*  
*may appear unto Men to fast.* This Cor-  
ruption was, in our Saviour's time, grown  
in a manner so universal, among the most  
Eminent Men of the Jews; that, as if  
it had been the known and proper charac-  
teristick of some of their principal Sects,  
he sometimes, without mentioning the  
particular, thought it sufficient to admo-  
nish and caution his Disciples in those ge-  
neral words, *St Matt. xvi. 6; Take heed*  
*and beware of the Leaven of the Phari-*  
*sees and of the Sadducees; Of the Leaven,*  
that is, (as the Evangelist explains it, *ver.*  
*12;)* of the Doctrine of the Pharisees and  
of the Sadducees; and *St Luke* still more  
VOL. X. Q 2 expressly,




# 228 *Of the several sorts of Hypocrisy.*

S E R M. expressly, *ch. xii. 1* ; *The Leaven of the*  
 X. *Pharisees, which is Hypocrisy.*

AFTER our Saviour's time, the *Apostles* describe to us the *same* kind of *hypocrisy*, in the characters of the *worst* men who were in following Ages to arise in the Church. The *Times shall come*, saith *St Paul*, *2 Tim. iii. 2*, when *men shall be lovers of their own selves,----more than lovers of God ; Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof;----creeping into houses, and leading captive silly women, laden with Sins, led away with divers Lusts.* His meaning is, to describe *such* persons, as under pretence of *Sanctity* and a *Form* of *Godliness*, or with great zeal for certain *Rites* and *Ceremonies* and *Appearances* of Religion, either cheat and defraud men in their *dealings* without Truth and Justice, or corrupt mens manners, and seduce men and women into the Practice of *Immoralities*, as if *not inconsistent* with Religion. Our Saviour has given us a never-failing Rule, to discover this hypocrisy: *By their Fruits*, says he, *ye shall know them ; Mat. vii. 16.* Not by their Zeal, not by their *Fierceness*, for

This



This or the other particular *Opinion*, for S E R M.  
 This or the other particular *Form* of God- X.  
 liness; but by their *Fruits*, says he, by   
 the general and habitual Tenour and  
 Course of their Lives, by *This* ye shall  
 know them. For, as a good Tree can  
 no otherwise be distinguished from a bad  
 one, but by the Fruit it bears; so in mat-  
 ters of Religion, *whatever*, under *any*  
*pretence* whatsoever, has *any other* ten-  
 dency, than to promote Truth and Justice,  
 Plainness and Simplicity, Sobriety and  
 Righteousness, Meekness and Equity, Cha-  
 rity and universal Good-will amongst Men;  
 whatever (I say) has *any other* Tendency  
 than This, is, by our Saviour's Rule, most  
*certain Hypocrisy*: 'Tis *Professing to know*  
*God*, but in *Works denying him*, Tit. i.  
 16: From hence we may easily judge,  
 under what Head are to be placed the  
*gainful Doctrines of Purgatory*, of *Mas-*  
*ses for the Dead*, of *private Confessions*  
*and Absolutions by the Power of the Priest*,  
*of Prohibitions of Meats by the Authority*  
*of the Church*, in order to grant *Indul-*  
*gences for the Churches Profit*; and the  
 like. Concerning which kind of things,

S E R M. St Paul speaks prophetically, 1 Tim. iv. 2;  
 X. *seducing Spirits*, saith he, *speaking lies in*  
 ~~~~~ *hypocrisy; having their conscience seared*  
with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and
commanding to abstain from meats; and
so on: And Tit. i. 11; Teaching things
which they ought not, for filthy Lucre's
sake. Which sort of Doctrines, because
they are naturally accompanied with a fac-
tious and contentious Spirit, without which
they can never be supported; and because
they are of such a Nature, as can never
proceed from mere Errour of the Under-
standing, but always arise from some Per-
verseness of the Will, inconsistent with
the sincerity and good conscience of a
Christian; therefore they are by the Apo-
stles stiled Factions or Heresies; that is,
corrupt Notions propagated by wicked
men for wordly and factious Purposes,
against the conviction of their own Con-
sciences: Tit. iii. 10; A man that is an
Heretick, reject; knowing that he that is
such, is subverted, and sinneth, being con-
demned of himself: And 2 Pet. ii. 1;
They shall bring in damnable Heresies, even
denying the Lord that bought them: That
 is,

Of the several sorts of Hypocrisy. 231

is, departing from God, (who redeemed S E R M.
or *bought* them to himself with a price, X.
even with the precious Blood of Christ,)
they shall *through Covetousness*, saith he,
(that is, through the Love of this world,
through Ambition, or the Desire of Tem-
poral Power and Profit,) *with feigned*
words make merchandise of you; ver. 3.

THIS, is the *first* and *highest* degree
of *hypocrisy*; when men thus, with a
formed Design and deliberate Intention,
endeavour under a Pretence of Religion,
and an Appearance of serving God, to
carry on wordly and corrupt Ends. And
because the word *hypocrisy* is Now gene-
rally used in This *worst* Sense; therefore,
if men know themselves to be free from
this greatest and most hateful degree of it,
they are too apt immediately to flatter
themselves, that they are consequently in
no sense chargeable with being Hypocrites
at all. But the Scripture frequently uses
the same word in several *lower* senses, which
deserve carefully to be taken notice of;
when it describes men, not indeed *profligate*
as the fore-going, but yet, in their

S E R M. several degrees, justly charged with being
 X. guilty of *Hypocrisy*.



II. *Secondly* THEREFORE; those who not absolutely mean to cast off all Religion, nor dare in their own hearts totally to despise it; but yet willingly content themselves with the *formal* part of it, and, by zealously observing certain outward Rites and Ceremonies, think to atone for great Defects of Sobriety, Righteousness and Truth; *These* also the Scripture always includes, under the character and denomination of *Hypocrites*. *These*, the presence of the Ark of God, preserved not, in the days of *Saul*, from falling into the hands of the *Philistines*. *These*, the Temple of God, and the Sacredness of the place wherein he had chosen, above all the Nations upon Earth, to place his Name there; delivered not from the desolations brought upon *Jerusalem*, by the *Chaldeans* and the *Romans*. *These*, all the Promises made by Christ in the New Testament to his Church, rescued not, in the days of the Christian Emperors, from the over-flowing deluge of barbarous Nations, of *Goths* and *Vandalls*, from *abroad*;
 nor

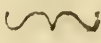
nor from the growing corruption of ido-S E R M.
latrous Ceremonies, and Saint-worship, X.
from *within*. These, each in their several
Ages, were zealous for the *Name* of their
Religion, but not for the *righteousness*
thereof; and therefore God removed, their
Candlestick out of its place. This, is
That species of Hypocrisy, for which
Samuel reprov'd *Saul*, 1 Sam. xv. 22 ;
Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-
offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the
Voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey, is
better than sacrifice ; and to hearken, than
the fat of Rams : And for which the Pro-
phet *Hosea* thus reproves the people of
the *Jews* in *His* time, ch. vi. 6 ; *I desired*
Mercy, and not Sacrifice ; and the Know-
ledge of God, more than Burnt-offerings.
This also was, in our Saviour's days, the
case of the *better* sort of Pharisees, of
Those who seem, *not to have been* wholly
profligate and void of all Religion in
their Hearts, but *superstitious* with regard
to *small* things, to the Neglect of *Greater*.
Such, as he stiles *hypocrites* ; for *teaching,*
as Doctrines, the Commandments of Men ;
St Matt. xv. 9 : For contributing super-
stitiously

S E R M.
X.

stitiously, to the adorning and beautifying of the Temple, that particular Portion of their Goods, which they ought to have imployed in maintaining their poor and indigent Parents; *ver. 5*: For being zealous in the observation of the *traditionary* Ceremonies of their Fore-Fathers, in the frequent *washing of hands*, and *cleaning of Cups*, and other outward *Purifications*; to the neglect of true Virtue, and *inward* moral Righteousness; *Mat. xxiii. 25*: For being precise in *tithing mint, anise and cummin*; and *omitting the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith*; *Faith*, that is, Faithfulness or Fidelity in all their Dealings with men, *ver. 23*: Lastly, for being *more solicitous*, in keeping the *positive* Law of their *Sabbath*, (which ought not indeed to be left undone; But he accuses them for being *more* solicitous in attending to This,) than in works of *mercy, goodness, and charity*, which are of eternal and unalterable Obligation; *St Luke xiii. 15*; *Thou hypocrite*, says our Saviour to the Ruler of the Synagogue, *Ought not this woman, being a daughter of*

of


of Abraham, to be loosed from this Bond, S E R M.
(from this *Disease*,) on the Sabbath-day? X.

OF the *same* Species of hypocrisy, are 
They guilty in *All* Ages, who make the
Advancement of Religion, and the In-
crease of the Kingdom of Christ, to con-
sist chiefly in the *external, temporal, or*
worldly Prosperity of those who are called
by his Name; in Pomp and Splendour, in
Riches and Dignities, in Authority, Pow-
er and Dominion. *Not* perhaps that they
go upon the Principles of *Atheism and*
Infidelity, (which is the case of the *first*
and *highest* degree of Hypocrites, mention-
ed under the fore-going Head;) but, by
a *secret* Deceitfulness of Sin, and a Love
of this present World, their Judgment is
perverted to be more concerned for the
Authority of *Men*, than for the Com-
mands of *God*; and they judge of the
State of Religion, by the measure of such
worldly Advantages, as perhaps have *no*
relation to true Piety: Whereas indeed
the True Prosperity of the Church of
God, or the Increase of the Kingdom of
Christ on *Earth*, can consist in nothing
else, but in the things which will increase
the

236 *Of the several sorts of Hypocrisy.*

S E R M. the Number of his Subjects in *Heaven* ;
 X. And *That* can only be done, by the *Prevalency* of *Truth*, by *Simplicity* of *Doctrine*, and by *Righteousness* of *Practice*. For, *Not* they that *say* unto him, *Lord, Lord* ; that is, not they who make outward profession of *Christ's Religion* ; *shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven* ; but *they that do the Will of his Father which is in Heaven*. Without which real *Righteousness* ; as the *Body without the Spirit is dead*, so *Faith without works is Dead also*. For, *He is not a Jew*, saith *St Paul*, *Rom. ii. 28* ; (*neither is He a Christian* ;) *which is one outwardly* ; *neither is That circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh* : *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly* ; *And circumcision is That of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter* ; *whose Praise is not of Men but of God*.


III. *Thirdly* ; A lower Degree of *Hypocrisy*, (but *still* included under *That* Name, according to the *Scripture-notion* of the word,) is the *Behaviour* of *Those*, who *have* indeed *very right Notions* of *Religion*, truly judging it to consist principally in *righteousness* and *holiness* of *Life*,

Life, and accordingly being duly sensible of the necessity of Virtue and of moral Obedience; but yet content themselves with vain resolutions of *future* Repentance, and for the *present* live securely in the Practice of Sin. Against *This* Hypocrisy, this *secret* hypocrisy, this *Deceitfulness* of Sin, with which men impose upon *themselves* rather than upon *others*; our Saviour affectionately warns us, *Matt.* xxiv. 42; *Watch therefore*, says he, *for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come* :
S E R M.
X.


--- But be ye Always Ready; for in such hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh :--- Blessed is That Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing :--- But if that Evil Servant shall say in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his Coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the Drunken; The Lord of that Servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.

IV. Fourthly; THE last and lowest degree of hypocrisy, (described under That character

S E R M. character in Scripture,) is of *Those*, who
 X. *not only* have right *Notions* of Religion,
 and a due Sense of the indispensable Necessity of Repentance and Reformation *hereafter*; but even *at present*, have some imperfect Resolutions of *immediate* Obedience; and even *actual*, but yet *ineffectual*, Endeavours after it. These, are the Persons described, *Rom. vii. 19; The Good that they would, they do not; but the Evil which they would not, That they do.* They are the *stony ground*, on which the Seed was sown in our Saviour's Parable, *Matt. xiii. 5*; who *with joy receive the word*, ver. 20; But for want of *deepness of earth*, and *not having root in itself*, it *dureth only for a while*; and either upon the Approach of Persecution, or upon the Assault of Temptation from some beloved Sin, they very quickly *fall away*. Their *Heart*, as the Scripture expresses it, is not *Whole*, or *Right, with the Lord*; but they *serve Two Masters*, and their Affections are divided between *God and Mammon*. To these, *St James* declares, that *He who offendeth in One point, is guilty of all*; meaning, not that all Sinners are *equally Sinners*,
 but

but that whoever allows himself in any S E R M.
one known Sin, is thereby justly denomi- X.
nated, and will be punished as being a 
Transgressor of the Law. And our Savi-
our admonishes them, *Luke* xiii. 24 ; that
Many shall seek to enter in at the strait
gate, and not be able ; meaning, that so
long as they continue in the Practice of
any *one* Vice unreformed, and are not able
to prevail with themselves to forsake a
darling Sin, their Endeavours to obtain
the Kingdom of God cannot but be inef-
fectual. 'Tis *no better*, than a secret hy-
pocrisy ; to account themselves *righteous*
for not being guilty of *other* Faults, while
their False Heart indulges itself in any *one*
habitual known Sin, and speaks Peace to
itself by attending only to *one part* of its
own character. If they never forsake this
One beloved Lust, the words of *Zophar*
in the Book of *Job* are but too applicable
to them, *ch.* xx. 5 ; (and viii. 13 ;) *The Joy*
of the hypocrite, is but for a Moment, and
his Trust shall be a Spiders Web.

NEVERTHELESS, such Persons as
These, must by no means be compared
with those *much worse* Sinners, mentioned
under

SERMON. under the fore-going Heads. For, though

X. These *are* indeed at present in an *Evil* State, yet there is in them a Root of some Love to Virtue, which affords great Hope that it may in time spring up unto righteousness, and unto Life eternal. They are the *bruised Reed*, which ought not to be *broken*; and the *smoking Flax*, which ought not to be *quenched*. They are, what the Apostle calls, *Heb. xii. 13, the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; the Lame*, which ought not to be *turned out of the way, but that it rather be healed*. They ought not to be terrified, and driven into despair; but, with all meekness and compassion, to be continually exhorted, that they finish their Repentance, and make hast to mortify every inordinate Lust, before *the Night cometh when no man can work*.

THUS have I briefly described to you, the several *sorts* and *degrees* of *hypocrisy*. The two *first* kinds; namely, the endeavouring deliberately, under a Pretence of Religion, to carry on *worldly and corrupt Ends*; and the presuming, by the observation of certain *Forms and Ceremonies* of
Any

Any kind, to make amends for the want of Truth and Righteousness, of Virtue and Goodness; these Two, are what the Scripture calls an *Abomination to the Lord*, or the highest possible Provocation of his Displeasure. The two *latter* sorts; namely the intending in some particular Instances to amend our lives *hereafter*, or the endeavouring it *at present* but faintly and ineffectually, through the Deceitfulness of Sin; these are the hypocrisy, (or the Falseness *indeed* more to *Themselves* than *Others*,) which belongs to the character of *such* persons, whom God usually *corrects* with his *judgments*, and gives them space of *Repentance*, and invites them by his *Mercies*, and bears long with them thro' his *Patience*; 'till either at length they deliver themselves by a *thorough Amendment* out of the Snare of the Devil, or become finally *hardened* and given up as *incorrigible*.

THE *Use* of what has been said, is, (as I observed at the Beginning,) that from hence every Man may learn, not to judge his *Neighbour*, who to his own Master standeth or falleth; but to exa-

S E R M. mine seriously the state of his *Own Heart*.

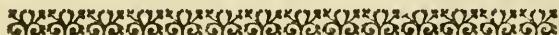
X. Which, whosoever does, carefully and
impartially, and with the true Spirit of a
Christian; will find little reason to be cen-
sorious upon *Others*. *Matt. vii. 5; Thou*
hypocrite, says our Saviour, first cast out
the beam out of thine own eye, and then
shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Mote
out of thy Brothers eye.





S E R M O N XI.

Who are the true Church of GOD.



GAL. iv. 22, 23, 24.


For it is written, that Abraham had Two Sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the Flesh; but he of the free-woman, was by Promise. Which things are an Allegory: For These are the two Covenants.



IN discoursing upon these words S E R M.
of the Apostle, I shall *first* consi- XI.
der *What* the Doctrine is, which
he here asserts and illustrates.
Secondly, I shall show, that 'tis
a Doctrine founded in the universal Rea-

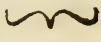
S E R M. son and Nature of Things, and inculcated
 XI. in every part of Scripture. And, *Thirdly*,
 I shall endeavour to explain, *wherein* lies
 the Stress and Force of That particular
 Argument, which the Apostle here draws
 from That Historical Similitude, which
 he stiles an *Allegory*.

I. *First*; I N order to understand clearly
 and distinctly, *What* the *Doctrine itself* is,
 which the Apostle is here asserting and
 illustrating; 'Tis to be observed, that as
Good and *Evil* are *themselves* essentially
 and necessarily distinguished, by the un-
 alterable Nature and Reason of *Things*;
 and *Good* and *Evil* Men are, in the Mo-
 ral sense, likewise essentially and necessa-
 rily distinguished from each other, by
 their *Doing* what is *Good* or *Evil*: So *God*,
 who can never possibly be deceived in
 judging, either of the *Nature of Things*
 or of the *Characters of Persons*; must con-
 sequently, in his *Government* of the *ra-
 tional and moral* World, be continually de-
 termined by the consideration of these ne-
 cessary and essential Distinctions. For,
What things really *Are* in themselves;
That, to an unerring Understanding, they
 must

must always necessarily *Appear* to be : And S E R M.
Whatsoever is, in *its own* nature, *Praise-* XI.
worthy or *Blameable*; cannot but, by an 
All-powerful and Impartial Governour, be
distinguished accordingly. *Virtuous* and
Vicious Men therefore, cannot but be in
the *Favour* or under the *Displeasure* of
God ; in proportion to the degree of their
respective *Qualifications*. Consequently,
the *Sum Total*, the *Congregation* or *Gene-*
ral Assembly, of all *virtuous and good* men
from the Beginning of the World, are the
True universal Church or *City of God*, the
heavenly Jerusalem : And all *Impenitent*
Sinners of all kinds, are *Reprobates*, or the
Sons of Perdition. But because in This
present World, where the *Hearts* of men
are not discernable to each other, 'tis im-
possible men can be *sorted* according to
these Real distinctions; therefore of ne-
cessity *Here*, the *true Church of God* must
be *represented by*, and in the *Sight of Men*
be esteemed to Be, All Those who *make*
Profession of being, and in *Appearance*
are, what they *really* ought to be : And
even of *God himself*, so far as concerns all
Publick Temporal Dispensations, they must

246 *Who are the true Church of GOD.*

S E R M. be look'd upon as his *Church* and his
 XI. *People*. The *Families*, the *Cities*, the
 Nations worshipping the True God; are
 Those to whom all *General Declarations*,
Promises, and *Threatnings*, relating to
 God's Church on Earth, must of neces-
 sity be addressed. Men of corrupt minds,
 insensible of the essential and indispen-
 sable necessity of true virtue, in order to
 be pleasing to God; have from hence al-
 ways been apt to deceive themselves, as
 if being Members of the True Church of
 God, and Professors of the True Religion,
 would be of real Advantage to them,
 without That inward Holiness and true
 Goodness of the Heart and Mind, which
 as certainly shows forth itself in the habi-
 tual Practice of a virtuous Life, as a Good
 Tree from a Sound Root will not fail to
 bring forth Good Fruit. The *Jews*, in
 the time of our Saviour and his Apostles,
 were almost universally fallen into this
 Great Errour, in the highest Degree and
 in the most remarkable manner. The *Fa-*
family of *Abraham*, had distinguished itself
 in an extraordinary manner from all *other*
Families; and the *Nation* of the *Jews*,
 from

from all *other Nations*; by being Publick S E R M.
Worshippers of the *One True God*, the XI.
God of the Universe; while all *other people* 
were overspread with the absurdest and
most barbarous Idolatries. And God ac-
cordingly had been pleased to distinguish
That Family and Nation, with repeated
Promises of the Greatest and most Lasting
Blessings; with *Promises*, that *He* would
be *Their God*, and *They* should be *His*
people; and that among *Them* should final-
ly be established a *Kingdom*, which should
have *no End*. 'Tis evident at first Sight,
that God cannot be the *God* of the *Dead*,
but of the *Living*; and that therefore all
these *Promises* to *Abraham* and his *Poste-*
rity, and to the True Worshippers of God
in *All Ages*, could be no better than mere
Mockery, if God were not able to raise
them from the Dead, that they might per-
sonally be Inheritors of the Promised
Kingdom, when the Time of its Estab-
lishment should be fulfilled. Upon This
ground therefore, the *Jews* had universally
an expectation of a *future Life*: And, as
being the Posterity of those Worshippers
of the True God, to whom all the Promises

S E R M. were made; they appropriated to *Them-*
 XI. *selves* all expectation of the *Eternal*, as
 well as of the *Temporal*, Favour of God.
 And so far as they were *truly*, what they
professed to be, *sincere Practicers* of This
 True Religion; *so far indeed* they had rea-
son to appropriate to themselves the *pro-*
mitted Blessings of God's *peculiar people*.
 But, by degrees, separating the *Letter* of
 God's Promises from the declared *Intent*
and Reason of them, they fell into an
 imagination, that the Promises made to
 God's Church and People, were appropri-
 ated to Those who were the Posterity of
Abraham literally and by *natural Descent*,
 and not to Those who were his Posterity
 in the *spiritual* and *religious* Sense, that
 is, who inherited his Faithfulness in ad-
 hering to That True Religion, upon *ac-*
count of which the Promises were made to
 him. This error of the *Jews* it was,
 that St *Paul* in this Epistle sets himself to
 oppose. And the *Doctrine* he asserts in
 opposition to it, is; that though the Pro-
 mises of God were indeed made to the
Posterity of Abraham, as his *Church and*
People; yet it was always understood, that
 this

this Posterity of *Abraham* in the *literal* S E R M.
sense according to the *Flesh*, was but the XI.
visible or *Earthly Church*, the *type* or re-
presentative of the *real invisible Church*
of God, the *true Children of Abraham* in
the *spiritual* and *religious Sense*, the *Suc-*
cessors and *Followers* of the *Patriarch* in
his *True Religion*, in his *Faithfulness* and
Obedience towards God. *Know*, saith he,
ch. iii. 7, *that they which are of Faith,*
the same are the children of Abraham;
and, *are Blessed with Faithful Abraham.* ver. 9.
For, God's *Covenant* having been made
with *Abraham* before his *Circumcision*,
which was but the *eternal Sign* or *Token*
of the *Covenant*; 'tis evident the *Founda-*
tion of the *Covenant*, was *That Faith* and
Obedience; in which whosoever followed
the *example* of *Abraham*, and *walked in* Rom. iv.
his steps, though he were not of *That li-* 12.
neal Descent which was commanded to be
distinguished by the *External Sign*, yet in
the *religious sense*, he was, in God's esti-
mation, a *child of Abraham*. *Ver. 28;*
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is
neither Bond nor Free; ---- for ye are all
One in Christ Jesus: And if ye be Christ's,
then

250 *Who are the true Church of GOD.*

S E R M. *then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise.* If ye be Christ's;
 XI. *that is, if ye be obedient to the everlasting Gospel, to That Gospel which was preached before unto Abraham, ver. 8 ; then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise.* For, in Christ Jesus, saith
 Gal. vi. 15. *he, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a New creature,*
 ch. v. 6. *(that is, Faith which worketh by Love :) And as many as walk according to This Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God. This is the Doctrine, which the Apostle at large asserts in this Epistle. And he illustrates it particularly in the words of my Text, by a Similitude drawn from what happened in the Family of Abraham himself. As Abraham, says he, had two Sons ; the one by a Bond-maid, the other by a Free-woman : And as the Son of the Bond-maid, though, according to the Flesh, as truly his Natural Descendant as the Other, yet was not to be Co-heir with Him who, by the Promise of God, was appointed to inherit : So, says he, the Jerusalem which Now is, and is in Bondage with her children ; the*
visible

visible earthly Church, which received the external ceremonial Law from *Mount Sina*; is not, by That *outward general* denomination, intituled to the eternal Favour of God; But the *Jerusalem which is above*, which is the *Mother of us all*, of *All* who by True Faith and sincere Obedience are pleasing to God; This *heavenly Jerusalem*, this *spiritual invisible Church or City of the Living God*, this *general assembly and Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven*; This it is, to which all the Promises of God, made to his *Church*, are, in reality, originally and finally appropriated. This is the *Doctrine asserted and illustrated* in the Text: Which was the *First thing* I proposed to show.

II. *Secondly*; THIS DOCTRINE (I say) is a Doctrine founded in the *universal Reason and Nature of Things*, and inculcated in every part of *Scripture*. That 'tis a Doctrine founded in the *universal Reason and Nature of Things*, appears sufficiently from what has been already said, under the *foregoing Head*, in opening the *Nature*, of the *Doctrine itself* laid down in the
Text;

252 *Who are the true Church of GOD.*

S E R M. Text ; Where I have shown, that all the
 XI. Promises of God, made at all times to
 his Church, to the *visible Society* of his
Professed Worshipers on Earth; must of
necessity, in the *nature of the Thing*, be un-
 derstood to be made to Them, *merely* con-
 sidered as the *Type* or *Representative* of the
real invisible Church of God; that is, of
 Those who, by the *sincere* Practice of *True*
 Religion and Virtue are, in the *Spiritual*
 Sense, *really* acceptable to God: *Rom. ix.*
8; *They which are the children of the*
Flesh, these are not the children of God;
but the children of the Promise are count-
ed for the Seed. That the same Doctrine,
 is moreover inculcated in *every part* of
Scripture; is very plain in the *Whole Se-*
ries both of the *Old* and *New Testament.*
 The *original Promise itself* made to *Abra-*
ham, was not to *Him* and *his Posterity*
 alone, but that *in his Seed All the Fami-*
lies of the Earth likewise should be *blessed.*
 And in a little time after This Promise,
 'tis recorded, that meeting with *Melchise-*
dek King of *Salem*, a Worshipper and
 Priest of the most High God, that is, one
 who professed and maintained the True
 Reli-

Gen. xii. 3.

Gen. xiv.
18,

Religion in the City over which he ruled; S E R M.
though his Family was not found in the XI.
Genealogy of the Patriarchs, as the Au-
thor of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* ob-
serves; yet *Abraham* acknowledged him as a
Worshipper of the same God with himself;
And not only so, but moreover, upon ac-
count of the Dignity of his Office, he paid
to him, even as to a Superiour, the Tenth of
all the Spoils, that he had taken in a War
with the neighbouring Cities: From
whence in the *New Testament* this person
is justly represented, as having been a
Type of Christ himself. In *following* Ages,
when the Nation of the *Jews* were settled
in the Land which God had promised to
Abraham, and God had himself given
them a particular Law, by the Observance
of which they were to be kept distinct
from all the Nations of the Earth; it was
still constantly declared, that their Obser-
vation of *That Law* was no further ac-
ceptable to God, than as it was accompa-
nied *with*, and became a Peculiar Obliga-
tion *to*, a more perfect Obedience to the
eternal *Moral Law* of Righteousness: *Hath*
the Lord as Great Delight in burnt-offer-
ings

254 *Who are the true Church of GOD.*

S E R M. *ings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the voice*
 XI. *of the Lord? Behold, to obey, is better*
 ~~~~~ *than Sacrifice; and to hearken, than the*  
*Fat of Rams; 1 Sam. xv. 22. The Preach-*  
*ing of the Prophets, through the whole*  
*period of the Jewish State, was to the*  
*same Effect; to warn That People against*  
*relying upon their being children of Abra-*  
*ham, and Followers of Moses; if they*  
*were not, in the Practice of real Virtue*  
*and Righteousness, as well as by the ob-*  
*servance of external Ceremonies, God's*  
*distinguished and peculiar People. And*  
*very plain Intimations are given in several*  
*Passages of the Prophets, of God's inten-*  
*tion to accept, out of All nations, those*  
*who worked Righteousness; when, of his*  
*own peculiar people, who professed to be*  
*Alone his True Worshipers, every wicked*  
*person should finally be rejected by him.*  
*Mal. i. 11; From the Rising of the Sun*  
*even unto the going down of the same, my*  
*Name shall be great among the Gentiles;*  
*and in Every place, Incense shall be of-*  
*fered unto my Name, and a Pure Offering;*  
*----saith the Lord of Hosts. In the New*  
*Testament, our Lord's Fore-runner John*  
*the*

*the Baptist began his Preaching, with exhorting those who came to his Baptism, Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father ; But bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance. And our Lord himself, to the same sort of Persons who relied upon Abraham's being their Father ; replied, Job. viii. 39 ; that they could not be, in the religious sense of the Phrase, Abraham's children ; unless they would Do the Works of Abraham. Again: Upon occasion of the Centurion's showing so great a Faith, as Jesus had not before found, no not in Israel ; he declares, that Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven ; but the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness. And concerning his Own Disciples in particular, the Professours of his True Religion under the Gospel-state ; he saith ; Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven ; but he that Doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. And the Apostles accordingly in All their Writings, are perpetually warning men, that as God*

S E R M.  
XI.

Mat. iii 9.

Mat. viii.  
11.

Mat. vii.

21.

is

# 256 *Who are the true Church of GOD.*

S E R M. *is no Respector of Persons, but in every Na-*  
 XI. *tion he that feareth him, and worketh righ-*  
 Acts. 34. *teousness, is accepted with him ; so, on the*  
 Gal. vi. 7. *Other hand, whatever mens Profession of*  
 Rom. x. *true Religion be, God will not be mocked ;*  
 12. *but, according to each one's Real Beha-*  
 Col. iii. 11. *viour and Practice, whatsoever a man sow-*  
 1. *eth, That shall he also reap. That, with*  
 2. *God, there is no difference between the Jew*  
 3. *and the Greek ; for the same Lord over all,*  
 4. *is rich unto all that call upon him. That*  
 5. *in the Gospel-estimation of persons, there*  
 6. *is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor*  
 7. *uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond*  
 8. *nor free ; but Christ, ( that is Obedience*  
 9. *to the Commands and Doctrine of Christ, )*  
 10. *is All in all. That Circumcision is nothing,*  
 11. *and Uncircumcision is nothing, but the keep-*  
 12. *ing of the Commandments of God. And*  
 Rom. ii. *that He is not a Jew, which is one outward-*  
 28. *ly ; (the Apostle intended it should be ap-*  
 1. *plied by parity of reason, that He like-*  
 2. *wise is not a Christian, who is one out-*  
 3. *wardly ;) neither is That circumcision,*  
 4. *which is outward in the Flesh : But He is*  
 5. *a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and cir-*  
 6. *cumcision is That of the Heart, in the Spi-*  
 7. *rit,*

*rit, and not in the letter; whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.* S E R M.  
XI.

HAVING therefore shown This to be a Doctrine evidently inculcated in every part of *Scripture*, as well as founded in the *universal Reason and Nature of Things*: It remains that I proceed now in the

III. *Third place*, according to the Method proposed, to explain *Wherein* lies the Stress of *That particular Argument*, which the Apostle, in confirmation of This Doctrine, draws from *That Historical Similitude* in the *Text*, which he styles an *Allegory*. *Abraham had Two Sons, the One by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman: And These* (says he) *are the two Covenants*. Now the Force of this Argument, to any one who carefully considers the Context, will appear plainly to be This. The Doctrine the Apostle contends for in This Epistle, is; that Christians of the *Gentiles*, who obeyed the Gospel; being *circumcised with the circumcision --- of Christ*, as he expresses himself, *Col. ii. 11*; were entitled to the Blessings of God's peculiar people, equally with *Those of the literal Circumcision*, who observed the Ceremo-



258 *Who are the true Church of GOD.*

S E R M. nies of the Mosaick Law. And the Ground  
 XI. of This his Assertion, is ; that not *Circumcision* or *Uncircumcision*, not one or another *particular Dispensation* ; but *Obedience to the Commands of God*, whatsoever those *Commandments* be, and under whatever *particular Dispensation* ; is what the *Divine Favour* is constantly annexed to. In opposition to This, the *Jews* in the Apostles days, were possessed with a very strong and settled *Prejudice* ; that since to the *Israelites* confessedly pertained the adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the Giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises ; since *Theirs* confessedly were the *Fathers* or *Patriarchs*, to whom all the Promises of God were originally made ; it could not possibly be true (they thought,) nor consistent with the Promises of God made to their Fathers, that these *Israelites* who had been all along the *peculiar people* or *Church* of God, should at last be rejected for not receiving the Gospel ; and that Believers from among the *Gentiles* of all Nations, should be received in their stead. Now in Answer to This *Prejudice*, the Apostle argues

Rom. ix.  
4.



gues very justly and strongly, not only (as S E R M.  
I have before shown) from the nature XI.  
and reason of the Thing, and from the ge-  
neral Notion of the Divine Attributes;  
but moreover in particular, from the A-  
nalogy of God's Method and Manner of  
proceeding, in the giving of those very  
Original Promises to the Patriarchs, upon  
which This Prejudice of the Jews was  
founded. Tell me, says he, ye that desire  
to be under the Law, do ye not hear the  
Law? That is; Will ye not attend to the  
Analogy of God's method of proceeding,  
in Those very Promises on which ye de-  
pend? For it is written, that Abraham  
had two Sons, the one by a Bond-maid, the  
other by a Free-Woman. That is to say:  
Even originally, the Promise was not made  
to all the children of Abraham, but to  
Isaac only: Which was, from the Begin-  
ning, a very plain Declaration, that God  
did not principally intend his Promise, to  
take place in Abraham's Descendants ac-  
cording to the Flesh; but in Those who,  
by a Faith or Fidelity like His, were in  
a truer and higher sense the Children and  
Followers of that great Father of the

S E R M. Faithful. In like manner, and for the  
 XI. same reason, the Promise was not made to  
 ~~~~~ Both the Sons of *Isaac*; but to *Jacob* only.  
 And, among the Posterity of *Jacob*, *All*
were not Israel, which were of Israel; but,
 in *Elijah's* days, seven thousand only were
 the True *Israel*; and, in the time of *I-*
saiah, though the number of the children of
Israel was as the sand of the Sea, yet a Rem-
 nant only was to be saved; and in *Hoseah*,
 God says, *I will call Them my people, which*
were not my people; and Her beloved, which
was not beloved. The *Strength* therefore
 and *Force* of the Apostle's *Argument* in the
 Text, lies plainly Here. What ye your-
 selves, (says he,) who are so zealous for
 the observation of the Mosaick Law, can-
 not but acknowledge to have been *origi-*
nally and always true; the same (says he)
 is true *Now*. What was *true* concerning
 the Two Sons of *Abraham*, and likewise
 concerning the two Sons of *Isaac*; who
 were the *Patriarchs* with whom God's
Covenant was *originally* made; is, by con-
 tinuance of the same *Analogy*, *true* con-
 cerning the *Covenant* established with the
Families, and with the *Nation* of the
 Jews,

Who are the true Church of GOD. 261

Jews, descended from those Patriarchs ; S E R M.
XI.
'tis true concerning the Church of God,
through all successive Ages ; 'tis true con-
cerning the Jerusalem that Now is, and
concerning That which is to come. As A-
braham had Two Sons, the one by a Bond-
maid, the other by a Free-woman : And as
the Son of the Bond-maid, though, accord-
ing to the Flesh, no less truly his Natural
Descendant than the Other, yet was not to
be Co-heir with Him who, by the Promise
of God, was appointed to inherit : So,
says the Apostle, the Jerusalem which Now
is, and is in Bondage with her children ;
the visible earthly Church, which received
the external Ceremonial Law from Mount
Sina ; is not, by that outward general de-
nomination, intitled to the eternal Favour
of God ; But the Jerusalem which is above,
which is the Mother of us All, of All who
by True Faith and Sincere Obedience are
pleasing to God ; This heavenly Jerusa-
lem, this Spiritual invisible Church or City
of the Living God it is, to which all the
Promises of God, made in All Ages to his
Church, are, in reality, originally and fi-
nally appropriated.

S E R M. THIS Argument, is a direct, full, and
 XI. strong Answer, to *That Jewish Prejudice*; which the Apostle, through this Whole Epistle, is endeavouring to remove. It clearly and distinctly obviates their *Grand Objection*, drawn from the Immutability of the Divine Promises to their Fathers; and entirely takes away the very Ground and Foundation of it.

AND from hence we may observe, how *unreasonable* it is, as well as profane, to imagine or represent the Apostle, as founding the *Truth* of a Doctrine upon an *Allegorical Proof*. The *Allegory* or *Similitude* he here makes use of, is not alledged as a *Proof* of the *Truth* of the *Doctrine* he is asserting, but as a *Proof* of the *Falseness* and *Groundlessness* of a particular *Objection* urged by the unbelieving *Jews* against it. The *Doctrine* itself is at large proved to be *True*, from the *Nature and Reason of the Thing*, from the *Perfections of God*, and from the *Whole Tenour of Scripture*: But a particular *Allegation* of the *Jews* against it, is, with the greatest justness and strength of Argument, proved to be *false and groundless*, from the *Analogy of a like*

a like case acknowledged by Themselves, in S E R M. XI.
which the Reason of the thing is the same.

AND from hence therefore, further, we may observe; that *Proofs* brought by the Apostles frequently to the *Jews* in particular, differ from *Proofs* brought to the *Gentiles*, in *This*; not that they were at any time Arguments drawn from things acknowledged by the *Jews*, in themselves otherwise inconclusive; but that they were drawn justly and strongly, (as I have shown particularly concerning the Argument in the Text,) from things well known among the *Jews*, though what the *Gentiles* were *Strangers* to.

THE evident *Application* of what has been said, is; that as, in the times of the *Jews* and of the Patriarchs from the Beginning, all were not *Israel*, which were of *Israel*; and the Son of the bond-maid, though equally the Seed of *Abraham*, yet was not to be Heir with the Son of the Free-woman; and all along, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit: Even so it is Now. All are not *Christians*, who are called after the Name of *Christ*: And not the Mem-

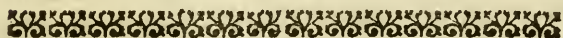
S E R M. *bers of Christ's visible Church on Earth, but*
XI. *they only who do the Will of his Father*
which is in Heaven, shall inherit the Pro-
mises. They only, who live in the Prac-
tice of true Virtue, Righteousness and
Goodness ; shall, in the Spiritual Sense,
be counted for the Seed.





S E R M O N XII.

Rebellion against God as malignant as Witchcraft.



I S A M. XV. 23.

*For Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft,
and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry :----.*



THE Occasion of these Words S E R M. XII.
was this. *Saul* being anointed

King over *Israel*, was sent of God upon the following
Message delivered to him by

the Prophet *Samuel*, *Ver. 2*, of this chapter : *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when*
he

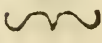
SERM. *he came up from Egypt; Now go, and*
 XII. *smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that*
they have, and spare them not; but slay
both man and woman, infant and suckling,
ox and sheep, camel and Ass. It may
 justly be esteemed a Question of some
 Difficulty, whence it might come to pass,
 that God should give so very severe a Com-
 mand; to do that, which, without such
 an express Commission, could not but
 have been censured as an unreasonable Cru-
 elty. And indeed there cannot happen
 any case, wherein it would be justifiable
 for any mortal Power, upon his own Au-
 thority, to take upon him to deal in such
 a manner with any Enemy whatsoever.
 But God, who is the Supreme Author and
 Lord of all, and who has an unquestioned
 Right to take away that Life which he
 himself at first freely gave; and who a-
 lone can without error judge when a Na-
 tion has filled up the measure of their ini-
 quity, and deserves to be destroyed by an
 exemplary and universal Judgment; and
 who *in the Life to come* can without respect
 of Persons distinguish equitably the Case
 of every Individual Person, which in the
 exemplary

exemplary Severity of a National Judgment was not so proper to be distinguished SERM.
XII.
here; *he* may, very consistently with Justice and Equity, command such universal Judgments to be inflicted when and where he thinks fit; there being in reality no difference, whether *he* commands a whole Nation, without distinction of Persons, to be destroyed by the *Sword*; as in the present Case of *Amalek*, and that of all the Nations of *Canaan*; or whether he consumes them by a *Flood*, as at the *universal Deluge*; or by *Lightning* from Heaven, as in the Case of *Sodom*; or by a sudden *Earthquake*, as when the Earth opened her Mouth and swallowed up *Dathan and Abiram*, with their whole Families at once; or by *Pestilential Diseases*; or by a *natural Death*. All these things, in the hand of *God* who ruleth over all; and who has an undoubted Power and Right over that Life, which he himself gave; and who in the World to come can make that exact Distinction of Persons, which there is no Necessity should be made here; in *his* hand (I say) all these things are equally proper Instruments of
Justice;

S E R M.
XII.

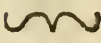
Justice; and, without all question, *he* may destroy a wicked Nation by what means he himself thinks fit. *Saul* therefore being sent of God with an express Command, to destroy every thing in *Amalek* utterly and without exception; executes this Command *in part*, as we read, *ver. 7, 8; And Saul smote the Amalekites, ---and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the Sword.* But 'twas *in part* only, that he executed his Commission. For in the same place 'tis recorded, that, 'contrary to the Command of God, *Saul and the people spared Agag the King of the Amalekites, and took him alive, and the best of the Sheep and of the Oxen, and of the Fatlings, and the Lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.*

HERE *Saul* was guilty of *Two* very great Faults; 1st, of *Covetousness*, in preserving for himself the Best of all those Spoils, which God had expressly commanded to be destroyed utterly; And herein he was the more inexcusable, because the Wrath of God had been before executed

executed upon the like Occasion, in an S E R M.
 exemplary manner, upon *Achan* who at XII.
 the destruction of *Jericho* had been guilty 
 of the very same Offence. 2dly, He was
 guilty of *Vanity and Ostentation*, in taking
Agag the King of *Amalek* alive, and
 bringing him with him in Triumph; when
 God had peremptorily commanded him to
 destroy them All. 'Tis said indeed in the
 Text, that he spared *Agag*; as if it had
 been an Act of *Mercy* and *Compassion*.
 But this is only *his own* false representation
 of the Action. For he who made no dif-
 ficulty of destroying even the *Women* and
Children without Distinction; 'tis evident,
 spared the wicked and tyrannical King, of
 whom it is said by way of eminent cruelty,
 that his *Sword had made Women childless*;
 'tis evident (I say), that *Saul*, who had
 made no Scruple of destroying even the
 Women and Children of the *Amalekites*,
 spared at the same time their Wicked King,
 not out of any tenderness and commiseration,
 but for *Vanity and Ostentation*, to
 triumph over him; or perhaps out of too
 great an inclination and readiness to enter
 into *Friendship* with him; And then his
 Case

S E R M. Case was the same with that of *Abab* afterwards, who, being commanded of God to destroy *Benbadad* King of *Syria*, after he had taken him Prisoner called him Brother and made a League with him; upon which the Lord sent a Prophet to him, saying, *Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter Destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people; 1 Kings xx. 42:* In like manner, in the present Case of *Saul*, God spake unto *Samuel*, (saying) *ver. 11th of this Chapter, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be King; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my Commandments.*

AND as he thus grossly transgressed in the first *principal Action*, so in the following *Circumstances*, as one Sin naturally draws on another, he fell into other continued provocations. For when *Samuel* came down to meet him, *ver. 13*, he presumptuously declares, (as if either his Obedience had been entire, or the Defect of it could have been concealed from the Prophet;) Behold, *I have performed the Commandment of the Lord.* The Falsity of which declaration,

declaration, when it was immediately laid S E R M.
 open, by the Spoils, which he had taken, XII.
 beng there present before him; he then 
first endeavours to transfer the Fault from
 himself to Others, ver. 15; The People,
 says he, *spared the best of the Sheep and*
of the Oxen; As if what the people did,
 was not done by His direction and Autho-
 rity: Which being too apparent to be de-
 nied, he next adds an Excuse, drawn from
 a pretence of Religion, ver. 15, 21; *The*
people took the chief of the things which
should have been destroyed, to Sacrifice unto
the Lord thy God; Which is as much as
 to say: *We have disobeyed the Command-*
ment of God, in order to serve him. To
 This the Prophet makes a double reply;
 first convincing him of his false notion of
 Religion, and then severely reproving him
 for his stubborn Disobedience. First, he
 convinces him of his false Notion of Re-
 ligion, ver. 22; *Hath the Lord as great*
delight in Burnt-offerings and Sacrifi-
ces, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord;
Behold, to obey, is better than Sacrifice;
and to hearken, than the fat of Rams.
 And then he severely reproves him for
 his

S E R M. his stubborn Disobedience, in the Words
 XII. of the Text; *For Rebellion is as the Sin
 of Witchcraft, and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry:* To rebell against the direct Command of God, to disobey in the instance of a plain and positive precept, to transgress against the clearest Light and most express Declaration of the Will of God; This is an Action of the *like* Malignity, even as the Sin of Witchcraft: And the persisting stubbornly in such Disobedience, is like the Practice even of Idolatry itself. The Word we here render, *Witchcraft*, signifies the following of Divinations and Inchantments, which were Superstitions forbidden with the severest Penalties under the Law; and were justly looked upon as a renouncing of God, by having recourse to other real or imaginary Powers in opposition to Him. When therefore a Crime is said to be *as the Sin of Witchcraft*; the meaning is, that 'tis a Fault of so deep a Die, of so heinous and provoking a Nature, that the obstinate Commission of it is altogether inconsistent with all true Principles of Religion,

Religion, and, in effect, a total renunciation of them. S E R M.
XII.


THE Word, *Iniquity*, in the latter part of the Text, is *Iniquity towards* God, the forsaking his Worship, the denying him his true Honour, the turning from him to false Gods, or joining them with him; and therefore 'tis expressed by Two words together, *Iniquity and Idolatry*. Which Two words in this place, do not signify Two distinct Things; but are of the same import as if it had been said in One, *the Iniquity of Idolatry*, the Perverseness or Unrighteousness of serving False Gods. And so the latter part of the Text, is, according to the frequent Stile of Scripture, only a repeating and strengthening of the Assertion laid down in the *former* part, by expressing the same thing in other Words in the *latter*: *Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry*: Rebelling, by obstinate Disobedience, against the *True* God, is like serving a *False* one; and Stubbornness in obeying God partially, or serving him only after our own way or

V O L. X. T humour,

S E R M. humour, is the same thing as not serving
XII. him at all.

THIS is the Proposition contained in the Words of the Text; and 'tis a Doctrine, of the greatest Importance in Religion. For, as among the *Jews of old*, so *now* also among *Christians*, most men have an extreme Abhorrence of direct *Idolatry*, or serving of False Gods. And because they hate a *False Religion*, therefore they are presently apt to cry out with *Saul*; *Behold, I have obeyed the Commandment of the Lord*. But alas! when it comes to be examined, *how* they have obeyed him; or when perhaps their own Consciences come, in the days of *Sickness*, to put them upon making *themselves* a strict inquiry into their own Actions; then it appears how *partial* their Obedience has been. Possibly they *have*, with *Saul*, destroyed the *Amalekites*; have constantly opposed the open and declared Enemies of Religion. Moreover perhaps, *whatever was vile and refuse*, *That they have destroyed utterly*. Whatever Sins did not easily beset them, nor offer them strong Temptations, from
their

their Constitution, their Interest, or their Friends; these Sins they have both heartily avoided themselves, and severely condemned them in other Men. But the Best *of the Sheep and of the Oxen*; the things which were dear to them, like a Right-hand or a Right-eye; the Sins which laid before them strong Temptations, of Profit, Honour, or Pleasure; These they could not but *spare*, and be unwilling wholly to root them out. And yet, as *Saul* endeavoured to transfer the Blame from *himself* upon the *People*; so, in the other Case also, 'tis not the Men themselves, 'tis not their Reason and Judgment, that chooses the Sin; but their inferiour Appetites, their Passions and Affections choose it for them, and drive them into it even perhaps in a manner against their Wills; And these they are willing should bear the Blame of it, as being a *Law in their Members, warring against the Law of their Minds, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin*. But further; they can still strengthen their Excuse, by alleging, as *Saul* did, that they do *Sacrifice also unto the Lord their God*;

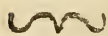
S E R M.
XII.


S E R M. They are diligent perhaps in all the external Forms and Ceremonies of Religion, and zealous for promoting its *temporal* Power and Authority in the World; And yet, while at the same time they live in the habitual Practice of any one known Sin, of Uncleanneſs or Drunkenneſs, of Injuſtice or Uncharitableneſs, of Fraud or Violence, or in the plain Breach of any other of the expreſs Commandments of God; notwithstanding all their Obſervation of the outward Forms of Religion, notwithstanding all their Zeal for the Temple of the Lord, notwithstanding all their Appearances of Piety, not only to others, but perhaps by a ſecret and careleſs Fallacy, even to *themſelves* alſo; yet This their Diſobedience in any one known Inſtance of Immorality, This their *Rebellion*, is as the Sin of Witchcraft; and their *Stubborneſs*, is as the Iniquity of Idolatry. Their reſuſing to obey the *True* God, whom they profeſs to worſhip, is like ſerving a *False* one; Or their Stubborneſs in obeying him partially, and ſerving him only after their own way or humour, is the ſame thing as not ſerving him

at all. For wherein consists the Iniquity S E R M.
of Idolatry, and the Wickedness of ser- XII.
ving false Gods ; but in This, that it dero-
gates from the Majesty of the True God,
and denies him That honour which is *his*
Alone peculiar due ? And is it not in a
manner the same thing, to deny the *Au-*
thority of a supreme Governour ; or to
acknowledge his Authority, and yet dis-
obey his *Laws* ? to refuse to serve him at
all ; or to serve him only partially, not
in the way which he requires and com-
mands, but according to our own Pleasure
or Fancy ? St *Paul*, makes them that
Know not God, and them that *obey not the*
Gospel ; *i. e.* those that acknowledge not the
True God at all, and those that do ac-
knowledge him without obeying him ; he
makes them equally liable to the same *Ven-*
geance ; 2 *Thess.* i. 8. Nay, if we consider
things with exactness, there will appear
much more Excuse for even the *greatest*
Errours, in the Profession of a *False* Reli-
gion ; than for *Disobedience*, under the
Knowledge of the *True*. The *only* Rea-
son, why the Wrath of God is so often
and so severely denounced in Scripture a-
gainst

S E R M.

XII.



gainst the *unbelieving Nations*, is *because* of Those things, upon account of which the Apostle calls them, at the same time, *Children of Disobedience*: And what our Saviour in *One Gospel* threatens as the severest of Punishments, that a man shall have his *Portion assigned him with the Unbelievers*; is in *Another* expressed, that it shall be assigned him with the *Hypocrites*. *Hypocrisy* therefore is as the Sin of *Unbelief*, and *partial Obedience*, like *not obeying at all*. Not that there are not *Degrees* of Disobedience in rebelling against God; but that a wilful Stubbornness in any *particular* Disobedience, is absolutely inconsistent with the Favour of God; and that there may be a Perverseness in persisting habitually in single Sins, even like to the Perverseness of a *total Apostacy*. One Mortal Wound destroys a man, as certainly as many; and incorrigible Obstinacy in the Practice of *Any Sin*, may be of equal Malignity even as Idolatry itself. Equal, not perhaps as to the *Degree*, of the particular Punishment it shall bring upon him; but equal as to the *Certainty* of its bringing him in general to *Condemnation*. God requires,

requires, that men should serve him with S E R M.
 their *whole* Heart ; and he that said, *Thou* XII.
shalt not commit Adultery, said also, *Thou*
shalt not Kill. But the Folly of Wicked
 men, will distinguish where there is no
 Distinction ; and they will serve God in
 what *manner* only, and in what *Instances*
 they please. This is that great Deceitful-
 ness of Sin, that secret Hypocrisy, which
 insensibly leads men into a *Rebellion* like to
 the Sin of *Witchcraft*, and into a *Stub-*
bornness like to the *Iniquity of Idolatry*.
 The external, the formal, and ceremonial
 part of Religion, they will possibly be very
 fond of ; but the inward and real Virtues
 of the Mind, Meekness and Purity, Hu-
 mility and Charity, Equity, Simplicity
 and true Holiness, for these they would
 gladly commute, and make amends with
 any Compensation. This is the great and
 general Corruption ; This has in all times
 and in all places been the *first* and the *last*
 Errour in matters of Religion. *Saul*, would
 needs *Sacrifice unto the Lord his God*, out
 of those very spoils, which he had pre-
 sumptuously taken, against God's express
 Command. But *Samuel* reproves his Folly,

S E R M. in the Words before the Text; *Hath the*
 XII. *Lord as great Delight in Burnt-Offerings*
 and *Sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of*
the Lord? Behold, to obey, is better than
Sacrifice; and to hearken, than the Fat of
Rams. In following Ages, the whole Na-
 tion of the *Jews*, would in like manner
 be always very diligent, in offering their
 Sacrifices and Oblations; as if *That* would
 make amends, for the Viciousness of their
 Lives. And yet how often did the Scrip-
 ture admonish them to the contrary! *Pf.*
l. 13; Thinkest thou that I will eat the
Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?
Nay, but Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and
pay thy Vows unto the most High. *Eccles.*
v. 1; Be more ready to hear, i. e. to Obey,
than to give the Sacrifice of Fools; for they
consider not, that they do evil. *Is. i. 11, 16;*
To what purpose is the Multitude of your
Sacrifices unto Me, saith the Lord? ----
Wash you, make you clean,----cease to do
evil, learn to do well;----if ye be willing
and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the
Land. *Hof. vi. 6; I desired Mercy, and*
not Sacrifice; and the Knowledge of God,
more than Burnt-Offerings. And, to mention
 but

but one Passage more, *Mic. vi. 6; Where-* S E R M.
with shall I come before the Lord, and XII.
bow my self before the High God? Shall
I come before him with Burnt-Offerings;
with Calves of a year old? Will the Lord
be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with
ten thousands of Rivers of Oil?---He hath
shewed thee, O man, what is good; and
what doth the Lord require of thee, but
to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk
humbly with thy God? Even in our Savi-
our's Time, after all these repeated Ad-
monitions; the Pharisees, which were the
strictest Sect of the Jews, still continued
to value themselves upon their mere exter-
nal Performances; and yet that very Scribe
who was sent to tempt him, could not but
acknowledge to our Lord, that he had said
the Truth, in affirming, that for a man to
love God with all his Heart, and ---his
Neighbour as himself; was more than all
whole Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices; St
Mar. xii. 33: They would Fast twice in
the Week, and pay Tithes of all that
they had, and for a Pretence make long
Prayers; while at the same Time, they se-
cretly devoured Widows Houses. They
would

S E R M. would with a specious appearance of Piety
 XII. dedicate to the *Corban*, that is, give to
 the Service of the Temple, as much as
 was expected they should bestow in charitable Uses ; only with intention to defraud their Parents and poor Relations, of that Support, which they had Reason according to the Laws both of God and Nature, to expect from them. They would with great Superstition wash the outside of their Cups and Pots, while the inside of their own Hearts, was full of unrighteousness and all uncleanness. In a word, they would do *Anything* rather, than what was *Right and ought* to be done ; and therefore our Saviour declares, that *except our Righteousness exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Among the several Corrupters of *Christianity* likewise, What is it that men have not been willing to undertake ; what Journeys and Pilgrimages ; what Hardships and Abstinences ; what voluntary Humilities, and uncommanded Austerities ; what profuse Gifts to Monasteries or Religious Societies, and unbounded Zeal for
 propa-

propagating what they call Right *Opini-* S E R M.
ons, that is, such as *happen* to prevail, or XII.
be in Fashion amongst them; instead of
serving God with Simplicity of Devotion,
and Loving their Neighbours as themselves?
Not considering the Admonition of St
Paul, that *if a man strives for masteries,* ^{2 Tim. ii.}
yet is he not crowned, except he strive law- 5.
fully; if a man runs in a Race, yet if he
takes a shorter Way to the Mark, and
runs not in that Course which is by the
Rules appointed and marked out, his La-
bour is in vain; And if a man professes
to serve God, yet if he serves him not in
That Method of Obedience which *God*
himself requires, but will go a nearer Way
to Heaven, either according to his own
Humour and Fancy, or in the Way of
Any human Invention whatsoever, fol-
lowing the Authority of *Men*, of *Popes*,
or *Fathers*, or *Councils*, or *Churches*, or
even That of an *Angel from Heaven*, (as
St *Paul* expresses himself,) in stead of the
plain Rules of *Reason* and *Scripture*; he
may justly fall short of his Reward. By
conceited Obstinacy in this way of com-
pensating for the Breach of God's plain
Commands,

S E R M. Commands, a *rebellious* and disobedient
 XII. Disposition grows upon men by degrees,
 till it becomes like *the Sin of Witchcraft* ;
 and their *Stubbornness*, 'till it be like the
Iniquity of Idolatry. But no *Description*
 of the Perverseness of this sort of Sinning,
 can set it forth in so lively a manner, as
 the giving some *Historical Examples* of it ;
 And I shall mention Two, which contain
 a more exact representation of the nature
 of this Stubbornness, than any *Explication*
of it in Words could do. The *One*, is the
 Behaviour of *Saul*, in the *other* Actions of
 his Life, besides That referred to in the
 Text : The *Other*, is the Behaviour of the
 people of the *Jews*, in their passage thro'
 the Wilderness, towards the promised
 Land. In the first place, *Saul* after his
 Anointment, being commanded to wait
I Sam. 10 *seven days* 'till *Samuel* should come to in-
 8. struct him what do, and offer Sacrifice
 xiii. 8. for him ; partly through Fear and Dis-
 trust, partly through Presumption, offers
 a Sacrifice himself ; which was expressly
 contrary to God's Commandment. For
 xv. 8. which, being severely reproved by the Pro-
 phet, yet in the very next instance, when
 he

he was commanded utterly to destroy S E R M.
the *Amalekites*, he transgresses again; and, XII.
contrary to a like express Command, co-
vetously spares the best of the Spoil, to
do Sacrifice (it seems) unto the Lord his
God. After This, he unworthily at-
tempts to kill *David*, because he percei- xviii. 11;
ved that the Lord was with him, and had 12, 15, 28,
appointed him to succeed in the Kingdom: 29.
And having failed of slaying him with
his own hand, he sends him against the
Philistines, in hopes he might be slain by
Them ; and gives him his Daughter to
Wife, on purpose to be a *snare unto him*,
and that *the hand of the Philistines might*
be against him. After This, being con-
vinced of *David's* Innocency, he swore
to *Jonathan*, *As the Lord liveth, he shall*
not be slain ; and yet presently after, at-
tempts again to slay him with his own
hand ; and, upon his escaping, sends Mes-
sengers to kill him in his House. This
not succeeding, he attempts the third time
to slay him with his own hand ; and,
when he had escaped, pursues him with
an Army ; and cruelly killed fourscore
and five Priests, and destroyed their whole

17;

21,

25.

xix. 6:

10,

11.

xx. 33.

xxii. 17:

19.

S E R M. City, for giving him refreshment in his
XII. journey. After This, continuing to pur-

xxiv. 2.

sue *David* with *three thousand men*, he providentially fell *himself* into the Hands of Him whom he pursued; and when *David* spared his Life, and sent him away unhurt, he seemed convinced of his own unreasonableness, and confessed to

17. *David, Thou art more righteous than I; For thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.* Yet immediately after, he relapses anew into his

xxvi. 2.

Folly, and pursues him again, to destroy him; and falling a *second* time into the Hands of him whose Life he sought,

21.

David releases him *Then also* unhurt, and he seems to repent again, saying; *I have sinned; return, my Son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my Soul was precious in thine eyes this day; behold, I have played the Fool, and have erred exceedingly.* Yet even after *This*

xxvii. 4.

the History tells us, that the only reason why he pursued him not yet *again*, was because *David* had escaped further into the Land of the *Philistines*. At last, finding himself forsaken of God, for his repeated

peated Follies ; though he had *Himself* S E R M. XII.
 cut off all the Wizards out of the Land, yet he takes pains to search out and apply
 himself to a Woman reputed to have a Familiar-Spirit ; Probably a *Cheat*, like xxviii. 6, 7.
 the rest of the Diviners : For when instead of the Woman's practising her delusive Arts, God thought fit, in reproof of *Saul's* Wickedness, to cause in reality a Likeness of *Samuel* to appear ; the Text tells us that the *Woman herself* was affrighted at the unexpected Appearance, and cried out *with a loud voice* in great Surprise when she saw *Samuel*. Which seems to be a plain evidence that her *Art* was a Cheat ; and that the Reality, unexpected to *Her*, was God's own extraordinary Interposition. And This takes away the whole Foundation of all those Vain Questions, *Whether the Devil had Power to disturb Samuel or not*, and *how he could foretel such future events*, and the like. The Event was, that *Saul* went away in despair ; and the next day, having lost a Battle, killed himself. It may well be wondred, how *Saul*, after so many repeated admonitions, could so often relapse so foolishly : xxx. 4.

S E R M. ly: But the Answer is, that Sin takes a-
 XII. way the Heart and Understanding of a
 Man; and that, in another Sense than is
 meant in the Text, a Rebellious Disposi-
 tion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stub-
 bornness as the Iniquity of Idolatry.

T H E Other instance I mentioned, is
 the Behaviour of the Jews in that passage
 through the Wilderness. In the first
 Pf. cvi. 7. place they remembered not God's wonders in
 Ex. xiv. 11. Egypt, but provoked him at the red Sea,
 saying, Because there were no graves in
 Egypt, thou hast taken us away to die in
 the wilderness. Then, when he had car-
 ried them through the Sea by a Miracle,
 Ex. xvii. 2. they wanted water to drink; and he had
 Numb. xx. brought them over the Sea (it seems,) to
 3. kill them with thirst. Upon which he
 fetch'd water for them out of the Rock:
 Pf. lxxviii. And Then they said; He smote the stony
 21. rock indeed, that the water gushed out, and
 Numb. xi. the streams flowed withal; but can he give
 3. bread also, or provide Flesh for his people?
 Pf. lxxviii. To satisfy This their lusting, he command-
 25, 28. ed the clouds above, and opened the doors of
 Numb. xi. Heaven; He rained down manna upon
 6. them for to eat, and gave them food from
 Heaven;

Heaven; And Then they said, *There is nothing at all besides this Manna before our eyes.* Nay, he rained also flesh upon them *as thick as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the Sea: But for all This, they sinned yet more, and provoked the most high in the Wilderness: They envied Moses, in the case of Dathan and Abiram; and angred Aaron the Saint of the Lord: They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the similitude of a Calf that eateth Hay: They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the Offerings of the Dead.* Lastly, when they came to the Land of Canaan, and were commanded to enter into it; then *they despised that pleasant land, and gave no credit unto his Word;* then the land was *a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof,* and it was defended by Giants, and had Cities great and walled up to Heaven, and could not be conquered. But when, upon This, God commanded them to return back into the Wilderness; then on the contrary they would go up into the land which the Lord had promised them, and would fight for it presumptuously, and were defeated.

S E R M.
XII.

Ps. lxxviii.
32.

Deut. ix.
7, 24.

xxx. 27.
Pf. cvi. 16,
19.

Ex. xxxii.
1.

Pf. cvi. 28.
Num. xxv.
2.

Pf. cvi. 24.
Num. xiii.
32.
Deut. i. 26,
43.

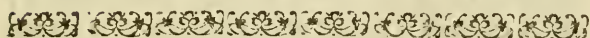
S E R M. In all these Instances, *their rebellious disposition was as the Sin of Witchcraft, and their Stubbornness like to the Iniquity of Idolatry.*

THE Application is very easy, to the case of every stubborn Sinner in particular: And St Paul has expressly applied it for us in general; 1 Cor. x. 6; *These things, saith he, were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted; Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them;----neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed; neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted;----neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer: For all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*



SERMON XIII.

All Sin proceeds from some Misapprehension of God.



JER. V. 4.

Therefore I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.



IN the following Discourse, I SERM.
XIII.
shall consider some of the principal Instances, wherein men become *poor* and *foolish* in matters of Religion, because *they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.* And

S E R M.

XIII.

First; Some there are, who indulge a *sceptical* Humour, and do not believe God's particular providence and inspection over all events. This was the opinion, of a certain Sect among the ancient Philosophers; and accordingly as they thought the life of *God* consisted merely in ease and doing nothing; so they willingly persuaded themselves that the Happiness of *Man* consisted, in nothing but Vanity and Pleasure: They thought that *God* had no regard to what good or evil was done by men on earth; and accordingly *they themselves* had no regard to any thing, but Luxury and Pleasure; They said in their hearts, *God hath forgotten, he hideth away his face and he will never see it. Tush, say they, does God perceive? Is there Knowledge in the most High?* The Psalmist speaks of such persons, not who were absolute Atheists and thought God knew not what they did at all; but who thought it *beneath* his divine Majesty, to regard what men did.

Now from what sort of Misapprehension concerning God this proceeded, is not difficult to discover: They thought,

I

and


and so far indeed very justly, that God ^{S E R M.}
could not but be a perfectly Happy Being, ^{XIII.}
infinitely removed from all that care and labour, those difficulties and anxieties, which make a great part of the misery of humane Nature ; But must he therefore be altogether an *unactive* Being ? Cannot he with the same ease wherewith he *made* the World, (a work of infinite Power, Wisdom and Counsel;) cannot he with the same ease *govern* it also and preside over it ? Cannot he who at one view sees and observes all things that are done in the World ; cannot he concern himself for the *benefit* and *well-government* of his Creatures, by punishing the Evil and rewarding the Good ; without diminishing from his own infinite Happiness ? Especially since Justice and Holiness are no less essential to him, than Happiness, and even *That* Happiness itself consists, not in Rest and doing nothing, but in exercising and displaying those Perfections, of infinite Wisdom, Holiness and Justice. 'Tis manifest therefore, that the folly of such persons as these, proceeds from a very weak and indeed *ridiculous* Misap-

S E R M. prehension of the Happiness of the divine
 XIII. Nature; that they *know not* at all *the way*
 of *the Lord*, nor have *any* right understanding of the Perfections of *God*.

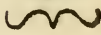
Secondly; OTHERS there are, who though they cannot deny God's particular Providence and Inspection over all things, yet will not believe that he has so great a Concern, about the *moral* good or evil actions of Men. This is the case of those Libertines, who though they pretend indeed to *acknowledge* the obligations of *Natural* Religion in Opposition *only* to *Revelation*, yet in reality 'tis plain they have no true Sense of the difference of moral Good and Evil at all, nor any just and worthy Apprehension of the Moral Attributes of God. The marks of infinite Knowledge, Power and Wisdom, in the contrivance of this Fabrick of the World, and in the disposing all things in that order and harmony, which men may admire and adore, but can never perfectly understand and comprehend; are such convincing and undeniable Proofs of the *Being* of God, and of the *Natural Perfections* of his essence, that they cannot
 indeed

indeed deny that there is such a *Powerful* S E R M.
and *Wise* Being; But that he is indued also XIII.
with those *moral* Perfections of infinite
Justice, Goodness and Truth; and that
consequently he cannot be pleased with
any Creature, which does not endeavour,
in its proportion and capacity, to imitate
these divine perfections; this they are by
no means willing to grant, as being incon-
sistent with those vicious courses, from
which they are resolved not to depart.
Now These also are manifestly *poor* and
foolish in the notions they frame to them-
selves concerning God; as if his *moral*
Attributes were not necessarily connected
with his Natural ones, and as if it were
possible that he might be infinitely Wise
and Powerful, without being Holy, Just
and True. For are there not as evident
footsteps of the *Justice* and *Goodness* of
God's government of the World; as there
are of the *Power* and the *Wisdom* of it?
or is it possible that *He* should be an All-
powerful and All-wise Governour, whose
Government is not settled on Justice, Good-
ness and Truth? What are Wisdom and
Knowledge, without Justice and Veracity,

S E R M. or Dominion and Power, without Holiness, Righteousness and Goodness; but

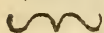
 XIII. Qualifications that may belong to the worst, and most hateful Being in the World? So that to bereave the divine Majesty of those *moral* Attributes, is to take away from it entirely the nature and notion of God. In a Word; that Justice and Truth are in themselves things good and excellent, and *fit* to be the Rules of Government; the Adversaries of Religion themselves cannot deny. If then God be *Wise*, that he cannot but *know* what is fit; if he be *all-powerful*, that he cannot be *compelled*; if he be *all-knowing*, that he cannot be *deceived*; it follows that he *will* also do what is fit; and then there *must* be a difference made between Good and Evil, and a reward or punishment appointed for Virtue or Vice.

Thirdly; T H E R E are some Others, who though they are very sensible of the particular Regard God has to the morally good or evil actions of men, yet so far are they from having any right knowledge of *the way of the Lord*, and of *the judgments of their God*, that considering the absolute

lute Sovereignty and Dominion of God, S E R M.
they are so suspicious of things being be- XIII.
fore determined by an unalterable Fate, 
that they cannot but be remiss and fall
short of that diligence in governing the
actions of their Lives, which is requisite
to the making men truly virtuous. And
this hath been the case of many among
Christians; who, though they are firmly
perswaded both of the *justice and goodness*
of God *in general*, yet being suspicious
of things being originally fixed by they
know not what secret and unalterable fa-
tality, they have remitted of their dili-
gence in a virtuous course. And undoubt-
edly it cannot but cut the Sinews of all
diligence in virtue, if men be suspicious
at the same time, that possibly they may
not profit thereby: It cannot be, that a
man should with hearty diligence and pa-
tient continuance in well-doing endeavour
to work out his own Salvation with fear
and trembling, who is not perswaded that
God has *really* given him power both to
will and to do, and that he shall be ac-
cepted according to his diligence and con-
stancy, in exercising that power. The
con-


S E R M.

XIII.



contrary error has plainly sprung, from a mistaken notion of the Absolute Sovereignty and Dominion of God. For though God is indeed absolute in Dominion and infinite in Power, yet he can no more make use of these Prerogatives to deal hardly with any of his Creatures, than he can exercise one Attribute in opposition to another. God may do with his creatures whatever he wills or pleases; but his will and pleasure is always regulated by the eternal Laws, of Justice and Goodness. Since therefore he has placed Man here upon earth as in a State of probation, and set before him Life and Death as the reward of Virtue and the punishment of Vice; exhorting him, encouraging him, intreating him, *in* his Gospel and *by* his Ministers, to chuse Life and to refuse Death; it cannot possibly be, that any one who is sincere in his endeavours can fail of being truly religious, or that any one who is truly religious, can fall short of eternal Life. So that whatever determinations in Other respects God may have made, secret and unknown to us; yet This we are as sure of, as we are of the

the Truth and Faithfulness of God, that there cannot possibly be any determination with him, whereby a virtuous man shall be excluded from Happiness, or a wicked man secured from eternal Misery.

S E R M.
XIII.


Fourthly and Lastly; OTHERS there are, who instead of *knowing* and understanding the *judgment of God*, as the Scripture exhorts; on the contrary perswade themselves, that the Threatnings of God are not so terrible, as the Scripture seems to represent them; or that he will not be so severe in the execution of them, as the Gospel teaches us to apprehend. And This proceeds plainly from a false Notion, concerning the Mercy and Goodness of God. Men who profess themselves Christians, make no doubt but there *is* a God, who created all things by the word of his Power, and upholds and governs them by the wisdom of his Providence: They make no doubt also, but that God inspects all the actions of his Creatures, and that he *will reward* the Good, and in some measure *punish* also, at least some kinds and degrees of evil: But then, that his threatnings are so terrible, as the Scripture re-

2 presents

S E R M. presents them ; and that he will be so severe
 XIII. in the execution of them, as the Gospel
 teaches us to apprehend ; this they can
 very hardly perswade themselves to believe. They know the Mercy of God is infinite ; and therefore they hope it will swallow up his Justice : They know the Goodness of God is unexhaustible ; and therefore they hope he will not punish *wickedness* so severely as he has threatned, nor exact so *much virtue* as he has required in his Gospel : and upon these grounds they go on in a course of Licentiousness, hoping that God will either accept their Repentance when they have served themselves of Sin all the best part of their Lives ; or at least that he will have some Mercy and Compassion on them, and not punish them with such Severity as the Gospel seems to threaten.

N O W in order to lay open the vanity of these false hopes, I shall endeavour to show briefly ; 1st, That God's Mercy, however infinite, yet is not so great as to interfere with his Justice ; 2^{dly} ; That we have no reason in the world to expect, that God will be less severe in the execution
 tion

tion of his punishments, than he has S E R M.
been in his threatnings rightly understood; XIII.
and 3dly, That God will not accept any
less degree of Righteousness and Virtue,
than he has declared in his Holy Gos-
pel.

I. *First*; G O D's Mercy, however infi-
nite, yet is not so great, as to interfere
with his Justice. God is as merciful, as
is consistent with the Holiness and the
Purity of his Nature, and with the Ho-
nour of his divine Laws: His Mercy
therefore extends itself to all penitent Sin-
ners, that is, to all who reform and a-
mend; but it can never possibly be recon-
ciled to Sin, nor extend itself to any one
who continues wicked. To go on there-
fore in a course of any known Sin,
in hopes that notwithstanding our impe-
nitence God will finally be merciful and
have compassion upon us, is, when pardon
is offered with some particular Limita-
tions, to put ourselves voluntarily in the
number of those, who are expressly ex-
cepted from the benefit of that indul-
gence: And to continue in a wicked State
for the present, with a design to deliver
our-

S E R M. ourselves *at the last* by Repentance; is
 XIII. wilfully to suffer Shipwreck, in hopes of
 being saved at the last by a Plank. Our
 natural reason teaches us, that God is infinitely Merciful; but it teaches us also that he is perfectly Just: and the Scripture is not more large, in describing the Bowels of the divine Mercy, than it is in setting forth the Severity of his Justice. It teaches us that God is indeed full of Compassion, Long-suffering, and of great Pity; that he loves not to grieve the children of Men, nor takes any delight in the destruction of a Sinner; that he is willing to forgive, yea earnestly desirous that men would be led by his Mercies, or driven by his Judgments to Repentance: But then it tells us also, that our God is a consuming Fire; and that our Saviour himself, who gave himself a ransom for all those who believe and obey him, shall come *in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not his Gospel*; That the Wrath of the *Lamb himself* shall be insupportable, as well as the Face of Him that sitteth on the Throne. It assures us that the Gospel, that Last
 and

and gracious Covenant of Mercy and Forgiveness, is yet the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, wherein the wrath of God is most expressly revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men: It tells us of a *lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; of the worm that dieth not, and of the fire that is not quenched*: that they who obey not the Gospel, *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*; and that *it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for those who neglect this great Salvation, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace.*

II. Secondly; WE have no reason in the World to expect, that God will be less severe in the execution of his punishments, than he has been in his threatnings rightly understood, and not misapplied by melancholy or enthusiastick Apprehensions. God has threatned Death and everlasting Destruction, as the Punishment of incorrigible disobedience in *general*; and in *particular*, to every sort and degree of Wicked-

S E R M. Wickedness, a proportionable *sort* and *de-*
 XIII. *gree* of Torment, *in* that State of ever-
 lasting Destruction, or of final exclusion
 from the Kingdom of God: And if men
 notwithstanding all the mercies and the
 gracious invitations, notwithstanding all
 the judgments and the terrours of the
 Lord, will continue incorrigible; they
 have no reason to expect but he will re-
 ally condemn them. God's Goodness is
 infinite and perfect; but 'tis also so tem-
 pered with Wisdom and Justice, as makes
 a more compleat character of the Judge
 of all the earth, than an infinite indul-
 gence would do. His Love to Mankind
 is sincere, and he really designs our hap-
 piness, if we hinder it not ourselves;
 He has given us abundant evidence of
 That; and especially in his sending to us
 his own Son, to reveal the grace of the
 Gospel for our Salvation: But then he has
 also as effectually discovered to us, that
 his Tenderness towards Mankind is not so
 great, as his Love of true Virtue and his
 Hatred of Vice; and if we *will* be wick-
 ed, he has given us satisfactory proof that
 it is not contrary to the Goodness of his
 Nature

Nature to permit us to be miserable. The Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting Chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day: Those great and powerful Spirits, when by an unreasonable and ungrateful Disobedience they had made themselves unworthy of that Glory and Happiness, in which God had created them; he would not dishonour his Laws and his Government by suffering them to continue happy in their disobedience, but immediately banished them from the seat of blessedness into the regions of eternal darkness: And can *we* be so weak as to imagine, that God has a greater Tenderneſs for mortal Man, than he had for those glorious and immortal Spirits; that he should remit *our* punishment without our forsaking our Sins? So *far* indeed as *our* Nature is more infirm and pitiable than *theirs*, so far God *has* made a proportionable allowance in the Terms of the Gospel: But that he should spare obstinate and impenitent men, and suffer *Them*, more than Angels, to *defy* his divine Majesty; for This, there

S E R M.
XIII.
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S E R M. is *no* Reason in nature. When he had  
 XIII. created the Earth perfectly good, and  
 every way fitted for a happy life, he  
 cursed it because of Sin, and blasted the  
 Beauty of this glorious Fabrick, because  
 man was not worthy to continue in so  
 happy a Seat. Again, when the wicked-  
 ness of men was grown great upon the  
 earth, God swept them away with a  
 flood; and though vain men would not  
 be convinced by *Noah's* preaching, but  
 that God was more merciful than to de-  
 stroy a whole World; yet This threatening  
 was really executed upon them. After  
 this, the people of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*,  
 were destroyed with fire and brimstone  
 from Heaven; and set forth an example,  
 suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.  
 The *Jews* also, when they rebelled against  
 God, how were they destroyed with  
 Sword and Fire, with Famines and Pesti-  
 lences, with Wars and strange Desola-  
 tions? These things are all written for  
 our ensamples, upon whom the ends of  
 the World are come. And if these will  
 not convince us of the just Severity of  
 God; we may consider the Miseries  
 which




which happen in our own Age and Sight. S E R M.  
All the Afflictions and Troubles that fall XIII.  
upon Mankind; Pains and Diseases of  
Body; and the deeper griefs of wounded  
Spirits and despairing minds; are all di-  
rectly or indirectly the consequences of  
Sin. And if our own eyes convince us  
that these things are done in the *green*  
*tree*; if we see that God executes these  
judgments in this present World, and up-  
on mixt multitudes, where the righteous  
and the wicked must needs frequently  
be involved in the calamity together;  
what greater Miseries must we suppose  
are reserved in store against That time,  
when the Judge of the whole Earth shall  
have separated the Goats from the Sheep,  
and shall pour out his fury upon the  
wicked by themselves? His Punishments  
indeed, will not be greater than the wick-  
ednesses of Men deserve; neither will they  
*even Then* in that final perdition be *pro-*  
*miscuous*, or *disproportionate* in the *parti-*  
*cular* to the case of every single person's  
proper demerit; but in general, however  
*we* may presumptuously rely upon the  
infinite Mercy of God, we see it is not

S E R M. inconsistent with the Goodness of his di-  
 XIII. vine Nature, to make wicked men mi-  
 ~~~~~ ferable.

III. *Thirdly and Lastly*; G O D will not accept any less degree of Virtue and Holiness, than he has required in his holy Gospel. He has required that we be holy and virtuous, universally and constantly; And as 'tis certain he will not accept a *partial* obedience, so we have no good reason to expect he will be satisfied with a *late* and ineffectual Repentance. His Mercy extends itself to all that heartily repent, and for the future obey the laws of the Gospel; But it does not oblige him to reward those who obey him but in part, or who may seem to repent when 'tis too late to renew their obedience. In vain therefore do *They* hope to become Subjects of the Mercy of God, who either live in the breach of any one plain Commandment while they observe the rest, or who intend to observe them *all*, when they shall no longer have any temptation to break *any*. The Gospel, is indeed a Covenant or Declaration of Grace and Mercy to Mankind; but 'tis also a revelation

of the righteous Judgment of God *against* S E R M.
all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; XIII.

Rom. i. 18 : And a very groundless mis- 
apprehension of the divine Mercy it is, to
expect that it will prevent the execution of
those just judgments, which are denounced
with the greatest terrour in the very co-
venant of Mercy.

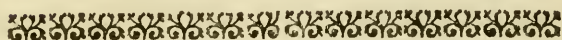
LET us not then deceive ourselves
with vain imaginations, but be vigilant
and careful, that our Repentance be time-
ly, and our obedience universal ; So shall
we become fit Subjects of the Mercy of
God, and meet to be partakers of the in-
heritance with the Saints in light.





SERMON XIV.

Of Religious Melancholy.



JOB vi. 4.

For the Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit ; The Terrours of God, do set themselves in array against me.




THESE Words are part of SERM. the Complaint of *Job* under XIV. that great Affliction, which God was pleased to send upon him, for the Trial of an exemplary and unshaken Virtue : And because it was sent upon him for *That Reason* only, and not as any Mark of the divine Displeasure ; therefore, how

S E R M. great soever the Calamity was in all other
 XIV. respects, yet was it by no means insupportable; because there still remained to him the great Foundation of Comfort, in the Assurance of a good Conscience, and the Expectation of God's final Favour. *He had been all his days a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil, (ch. i. 8;) And he had in his own Mind, even in the midst of his Affliction, the Satisfaction to reflect with Pleasure upon his past Behaviour, and to strengthen his Resolutions of continuing in the same Course for the Future. As God liveth, saith he, who has taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who has vexed my Soul; All the while my Breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my Nostrils; My lips shall not speak Wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.----'Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me; My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live; (ch. xxvii. 2.) And (Ch. xiii. 15;) Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain my own ways before him; He also*

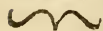
also shall be my Salvation, for an hypocrite shall not come before him. He knew, and maintained it against the Opinion of all his Friends, that God was not angry with him, even at the Time he afflicted him. He knew, that after a short Tryal, God would restore him to his former Prosperity. And if not; yet he *knew that his Redeemer lived, and was to stand at the latter day upon the Earth; and though after his Skin, Worms destroyed his Body, yet in his Flesh should he see God; Whom he should see for himself, and his eyes should behold, and not another; though his reins were consumed within him.* These considerations very much alleviated, even that singularly great and unparallelled Affliction, wherewith God was pleased to try this righteous person, and make his Patience exemplary to all succeeding Generations. Wherefore though, in the Nature of the *Thing itself*, in the Circumstances of the *external* Affliction, no Calamity could well be heavier than that of *Job*; yet, when the Disposition of the *Person* comes also to be taken into the Act, there is a Trouble far greater than

His:

S E R M.
XIV.


S E R M.

XIV.



His: Namely, when the Storm falls where there is no preparation to bear it; when the Weight is laid, where there is no Foundation to support it; when the Assault is made from *without*, and *within* is nothing to resist it. And *That* is, when the Judgments of God fall upon a *wicked* Person; when the Providence of God smites him from *without*, and his own Conscience torments him *within*; when *That* which *should* be his only Comfort and Support in the day of Trouble, proves *itself* the greatest and most insupportable part of his Calamity: This is indeed, a truly miserable Case; and can be exceeded by nothing, but *That* whereof it is a Part and a Fore-runner, even the Stingings of the Worm that never dieth. In all *other* Cases, the *Spirit* of a man will sustain his *Infirmity*; But when the *Spirit* itself is thus wounded, *who* can bear it? Then 'tis doubly true, what the Text emphatically describes, that *the Arrows of the Almighty* are *within* them, *the poison whereof drinketh up their Spirits*; *The Terrours of God*, do *set themselves in array against* them. They cannot

not say with *Job*; shall we receive good S E R M.
 at the hands of God, and shall we not XIV.
 receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord
 has taken away; Blessed be the Name of
 the Lord: But the Remorse of an impenitent
 Conscience drives them to despair; and, having
 no serious Thoughts of an effectual Repentance,
 their Mind is, like *Judas's*, tormented with
 an inextricable Perplexity. The Scripture
 represents the Misery of such a State, by very
 elegant Similitudes: *The wicked are like the*
troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose
Waters cast up mire and dirt; Is. lvi.
20. And in the second Book of *Esdras*,
ch. xvi. 77; Wo be unto them that are
bound with their Sins, and covered with
their Iniquities; Like as a Field is covered
over with Bushes, and the Path thereof co-
vered with Thorns, that no man may tra-
vel through; It is left undressed, and is
cast into the Fire, to be consumed there-
with. There is still a Third State, most
 melancholy, and truly pitiable; and that
 is of those, who neither by the immediate
 Appointment of Providence, as in the Case
 of *Job*; nor by the proper Effect

S E R M. feſt of their own *Wickedneſs*, as in the
 XIV. Caſe of an *Evil Conſcience*; but by their
 own *Imagination* and groundleſs *Fears*,
 by Indispoſition of *Body* and Diſorder of
Mind, by *False Notions* of *God* and of
Theſelves, are made very miſerable in
 their own Minds. They fancy, though
 without ſufficient reaſon, that *the Arrows*
of the Almighty are *within* them, *the poi-*
ſon whereof drinketh up their *Spirits*; And
 that *the Terrours* of *God*, ſet *themſelves* in
array againſt them. This is indeed a
 Caſe, which deſerves the higheſt Pity and
 Compaſſion, and ought to be treated with
 the utmoſt Tenderneſs. For, according
 to the different Circumſtances of the Per-
 ſons, and the different Occaſions from
 whence the Diſtemper proceeds; ſo ought
 we to endeavour, to apply different and
 proper Remedies. 'Tis very difficult, in
 a Matter wherein there is ſo great Varie-
 ty, to enumerate the ſeveral Caſes that
 may happen; and yet, without diſtin-
 guiſhing them in ſome meaſure under
 their proper Heads, general Directions
 can be but of ſmall uſe, and of very un-
 certain Application in Practice. The Prin-
 cipal

principal Instances therefore that most usually occur, and the Chief Occasions of such Melancholy Apprehensions, are such as follow. 1st; A mere Indisposition or Distemper of Body: 2^{dly}; A Complaint of Want of Improvement under the Exercise of Religious Duties, and Want of a fervent Zeal and Love towards God: 3^{dly}; An Apprehension of being excluded from Mercy, by some positive Decree and Fore-appointment of God: 4^{thly}; A Fear of having committed the Sin against the Holy Ghost: 5^{thly}; An Uneasiness arising from Wicked and Blasphemous Thoughts: And *Lastly*, a Terrour arising from the Consciousness of past Sins, and from the Want of Assurance of their being certainly pardoned.

1st; *THE First* and the most usual Cause of Religious Melancholy; which is *sometimes* the *only* and *entire* Occasion of it; and which almost *always* *accompanies* and *increases* it, when it arises from any of the *Other* Causes; is *Indisposition or Distemper of Body*. And This, though it is not properly and immediately of religious consideration, yet 'tis by no means to be neglected, slighted, or despised. For as
the

S E R M. the Mind operates continually upon the
 XIV. Body, so the Body likewise, whilst they
 ~~~~~ continue united, will of necessity influence  
 and operate upon the Mind. And 'tis  
 not unusual, to see the good Understand-  
 ing even of a *reasonable* person, born  
 down and over-burdened by Bodily Dis-  
 order. This therefore is a Matter, which  
 must by no means be made light of; but  
 Advice must be given suitable to the Case,  
 and proper Remedies applied to the Dis-  
 temper. The Chief Difficulty in such  
 Cases generally is, to perswade the Per-  
 son, that That Trouble, which he con-  
 ceives to be in his *Mind*, is more truly  
 and properly an Indisposition of *Body*.  
 But he may most likely be prevailed up-  
 on to seek for proper Assistance in that  
 Respect, by considering that even where  
 there is *real* ground for Trouble of Mind,  
 yet That being usually augmented by  
 concurrent Disorder of Body, Application  
 of suitable Remedies may with best Suc-  
 cess be at the same Time made for Both.  
 And it is not easy to imagine, how upon  
 remedying One, even sensible Persons  
 have, beyond what they could possibly  
 have



have expected, found themselves relieved S E R M.  
in the Other. The principal Sign, by XIV.  
which we may judge when the Indisposi-  
tion is chiefly or wholly in the Body,  
is This; that the Person accuses himself  
highly *in general*, without being able to  
give any instances *in particular*; that he  
is very apprehensive, of he does not well  
know what; and fearful, yet can give no  
Reason why; that he thinks very ill of  
himself, and yet has been guilty of no Great  
Faults; and fears that God also will con-  
demn him, and yet is not sensible by what  
presumptuous Transgression he has merited  
such Displeasure. In These Circum-  
stances, the Trouble, though without suf-  
ficient Cause, may be very great; and the  
Misery real, though without good Founda-  
tion; and therefore it deserves the great-  
est Pity and Compassion, and is not to  
be let alone to increase by Neglect; but  
all endeavours ought to be used, to re-  
move the Bodily Indisposition; and the  
Person at the same time perswaded as  
much as possible, that All Disturbance of  
Mind, not arising from any particular,  
distinct, known Occasion, is chiefly owing  
to

S E R M. to such Indisposition, and will be removed together with it.

XIV.

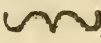
2dly; THE next Cause of Uneasiness and Disturbance of this Kind, is a Complaint of *Want of Improvement* under the Exercise of Religious Duties, and *Want of a fervent Zeal and Love* towards God. As hardened and obdurate Sinners, do by the open Neglect and Contempt of Religious Duties, apparently *grow worse*, and run perpetually into more Ungodliness; so, many piously and well-disposed Persons, but of timorous and melancholy Constitutions, are under continual Apprehensions that they do *not grow better*; that they make little or no *Improvement*, in the Ways of Religion; and that they cannot find in themselves such a *fervent Zeal and Love* towards God, as they think is necessary to denominate them good Christians. Now if by *Want of Improvement*, these persons mean, that, notwithstanding their constant Attendance upon the external Duties of Religion, yet they do not find their *Obedience* to the Commands of God more uniform, their Passions more subdued, their Lives more sober

sober and regular, their good Temper to- S E R M.  
wards all men more universal, their Temp- XIV.  
tations to Sin more constantly and more  
strongly resisted; This indeed is such a  
Want of Improvement, as they have just  
reason to be troubled at; and nothing can  
or ought to remove This Trouble of Mind,  
but such an actual Amendment of Life  
and Reformation of Manners, as the Gos-  
pel indispensably requires; and the pro-  
moting of which, is the main End and  
ultimate Design of all the outward Acts  
of Religious Devotion. But if by Want  
of Improvement, they mean only Want  
of *Warmth and Affection* in the Perform-  
ance of their Duty, which Duty they ne-  
vertheless do perform sincerely and care-  
fully; then there is no just ground for  
Trouble of Mind upon That Account:  
but they must be taught to comfort them-  
selves by considering, that the different  
degrees of Affection with which *different*  
Persons serve God, depends much more  
upon the accidental Difference of their  
Constitutions of Body, than it is any true  
Measure of the Goodness of their Minds;  
that in *one and the same* person, there will

S E R M. unavoidably be different degrees of Affection at different Times, according to the present Temper of his Body, the Order or Disorder of his Spirits, the natural Passions and Commotions of his Mind, without any real change in his moral Dispositions; that no man can at *all times* keep up an *equal* vigour of Mind; and those who are the *most* zealous, and the *most constantly* so, are oftentimes not the best men; their Zeal being frequently without knowledge, their eagerness often bent upon wrong things, and the warmth of their Affections fixed most strongly upon matters of the least importance: nay, that where the Affections are most rightly directed, and fixed upon their true and properest Object; yet even There, those who serve God upon *rational and solid Motives*, and steddily obey his Commandments upon the calm and strong Motives of a *right Understanding*, seem to act upon a higher and more excellent Principle, than those who are led into his Service with the warmest *Passions* and with the strongest *Affections*. In like manner, if by Want of *Love* towards

I

God,

God, any man means that he has not S E R M.  
settled in his Mind such a just Regard XIV.  
towards God, as determines him carefully   
to observe his Laws; This indeed is the  
greatest and most reasonable Cause in the  
World, of Disturbance of Mind; and  
such Trouble of Mind can be removed  
by nothing, but by immediate Repentance,  
and better Obedience. But if by Want  
of *Love* towards God, he means only,  
that, notwithstanding his best endeavours  
in the course of a virtuous life, yet he  
cannot find in himself that *Passionate Love*  
of the Supreme Good, which he finds  
some Writers have described in a sublime,  
poetical, and perhaps indeed in an unin-  
telligible manner; This is no just Ground  
of Uneasiness at all. For he may be di-  
rected to consider, that the Scripture  
speaks otherwise concerning the matter;  
telling us plainly and intelligibly, that  
*the Love of God is This, that we keep his*  
*Commandments*; And if any man fancies  
that he loves God in a lofty and abstract  
manner, while at the same time he hates  
and is uncharitable towards his Brother,  
or lives in the Breach of any other of the

SER M. Divine Commands ; the Apostle assures us  
 XIV. that such a one is a Liar, and the Truth  
 is not in him. On the contrary, whoever  
 sincerely *obeys* the Commandments of *God*,  
 in the Course of a virtuous and religious  
 Life, needs no other Mark or Proof of  
 his *Love* towards him. For the best and  
 most infallible *Sign or Token* of any thing,  
 is the *Thing signified* itself; And he that  
 by his Works makes evidence of the Re-  
 ality of the *Thing*, needs not much trouble  
 himself to compare and examine it by De-  
 finitions of *Words*. Whatever Principle  
*Obedience* proceeds from, even though it  
 be but the *Fear* of Punishment, and  
 Dread of the Divine Wrath; which some  
 have without reason imagined to be so fla-  
 vish and sordid a Passion, that God would  
 not accept the Services which spring from  
 so ignoble a Principle; even this Fear (I  
 say) of Punishment, and Dread of the  
 Divine Wrath, if it is not indeed the  
*bighest and noblest* Principle of Obedience,  
 yet it is undoubtedly a *very just and rea-  
 sonable* Motive to it; If it is not indeed  
 the most *excellent* Pitch of Virtue, yet 'tis  
 at least a *very proper Beginning* of it;



If it is not indeed a *Part* of the most *ex-alted* Love of God; and Love when it is become *perfect*, casteth out Fear; yet 'tis at least very consistent with its whole *Progress* in *this* Life, and a necessary Part of that *Regard* towards God, which is due to him from us as our Supreme Governour. And since God himself has given it us as a Motive to Obedience, the Obedience cannot be unacceptable to him, which proceeds from that Motive. Fear is one of the natural Passions which God has implanted in our Souls; and our Saviour does not command us to root it out, but only to direct it towards its right Object; *Fear him, who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.* The Laws of God are enforced in every part of Scripture, by *Threatnings* as well as by *Promises*; and the Apostles thought fit to persuade men by the *Terrours of the Lord*, as well as by the gentler Motives of his *Love and Compassion*. Vain Suspicions therefore, that our Obedience proceeds not from a right Principle, from a true and unfeigned Love of God; are by no means any

S E R M. just Occasion for Uneasiness of Mind ; provided always that we make but sure of  
 XIV. the thing itself, that we sincerely perform that Obedience, by a Life of Virtue and True Holiness.

3dly ; A *Third* Cause of Trouble of Mind to melancholy pious Persons, is an Apprehension that possibly they may be excluded from Mercy, by some *positive Decree* and Fore-appointment of God. From *Nature* and *Reason*, This Apprehension cannot arise ; because 'tis absolutely contrary to all our natural Notions of the Divine Attributes, to conceive that the infinitely merciful and good God, whose tender Mercies are over all his Works, should for his own pleasure, and not for any Wickedness of theirs, eternally decree any of his Creatures to be miserable. Neither in *Scripture* indeed, any more than in the Reason of Things, ( but only in the Writings of some unskilful Interpreters ) is there *Any* Foundation for any such Apprehension. For supposing there *be* some few obscure Texts, which unstable Persons may be apt to misinterpret to their own and others Disquiet ;

quiet; yet, is it not fit that the whole *Tenour*, S E R M.  
 the whole *Design* and perpetual *Aim* of XIV.  
 Scripture, should be the Interpreter of particular passages? And is not this the whole  
*Current* of Scripture from one End to the other, to declare, that *Far be it from God, that he should do Wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity; For the Work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways?* that the *Judge of all the Earth, will do what is right?* that he will render to every man according to what he has done, whether it be good or evil? that *with righteousness shall he judge the World, and the people with Equity?* that God made not Death, neither has he pleasure in the Destruction of the Living? And if this were not the whole *Tenour* of Scripture; yet, is it not undeniable, that the particular *Texts*, which speak after this manner, are infinitely clearer and plainer, and less possible to be misapplied, than those which are imagined to look the contrary way? Does not God swear by himself; *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, but rather that he should*

S E R M. *turn from his Ways and live?* Does not  
 XIV. the Apostle *St Peter* declare, that God is  
 not willing that any perish, but that all  
 should come to Repentance? and *St Paul*;  
 that God would have all men to be saved,  
 and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth?  
 And is it not fit that these plain Texts which  
 cannot be mistaken, should be the Rule  
 by which the *obscurer* ones are to be in-  
 terpreted; rather than that the *obscurer*  
 places should cause the *plain* ones, to be  
 perverted or neglected? And yet indeed  
 even the *obscure* ones, are not so much so  
 in themselves, as by our want of attending  
 to their true meaning. The *ixth* chapter  
 of the Epistle to the *Romans*, which has  
 sometimes perplexed the Minds of well-  
 meaning Persons, was by all Christians in  
 the first Ages without difficulty, and is  
 Now again by all rational men, who at-  
 tend to the Scope of the Apostle's Argu-  
 ment, more than to the Schemes of mens  
 own inventing, clearly understood to be  
 written, not concerning God's choosing  
 some *particular persons*, and rejecting o-  
 thers from *eternal Salvation*, but con-  
 cerning his rejecting the *nation* of the  
*Jews*, and receiving in the Gentiles to  
 be

be partakers of the *benefits of the Gospel*: S E R M. XIV.  
 And the *elect* there spoken of, are the *whole Christian Church*, whereof *all* nevertheless do not attain unto Salvation; and the *reprobate* there mentioned, are the *whole Nation* of the unbelieving *Jews*, whereof *all* nevertheless were not finally cast off: And where God's fore-determination of *particular Persons* is spoken of, 'tis not a fore-appointment to eternal Happiness or Misery, but always to some *temporal Office* or Advantage only. Thus of *Jacob and Esau* it was determined, before either of them was born, or had done either good or evil; that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was determined, what? only that the Elder should be Servant to the Younger. And when it was fore-appointed that our Saviour should be betrayed; it was likewise fore-appointed, not that *Judas* should betray him, but that our Lord should chuse on purpose into the number of his Apostles one such Person as *Judas*, whose own Wickedness he saw would make him a proper Instrument of accomplishing that Design. And when St Paul asks, *Who maketh thee to differ from another?* he does not speak  
 of

SERM. of *moral* Dispositions, but of *miraculous*  
 XIV. *Qualifications* for *Offices and Dignities* in  
 the Church; as is evident from the Con-  
 text. And when God hardened *Pharoah's*  
 heart, 'twas not that God originally made  
 him Wicked; but his own obstinate Wick-  
 edness made him worthy to be judicially  
 hardened, and a fit person to be raised up  
 by Providence for the manifestation of  
 God's Glory in his exemplary Destruction.  
 'Tis evident therefore there is no Ground  
 in Scripture, for any pious person, to ap-  
 prehend that possibly he may be excluded  
 from Mercy, by any positive Decree or  
 Fore-appointment of God.

4thly, ANOTHER Cause of Uneasiness  
 in the Minds of some melancholy pious Per-  
 sons, is a Fear of having committed *the Sin*  
*against the Holy Ghost*. And these may be  
 satisfied, by considering, that there is no such  
 thing at all mentioned in Scripture as the  
*Sin* against the Holy Ghost, but only the  
*Blasphemy* against the Holy Ghost; And  
*That* was, such a *reviling* the greatest of our  
 Saviour's Miracles, as to ascribe them to  
 the *Devil*; And This, by those that *saw*  
 them with their *own Eyes*, and who con-  
 sequently could have no greater Conviction,



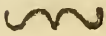
no new means offered them, to bring them to Repentance; And these very Persons were declared unpardonable, not upon account of the single *Act* itself of Blaspheming, but because *such* Blasphemy in *such* persons in *such* Circumstances, was an evident and certain Sign of an incurably wicked and malicious Disposition; As appears from the Words immediately following those which declared the Pharisees unpardonable, St *Matt.* xii. 33; *Either make the Tree good, and his Fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his Fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his Fruit: O Generation of Vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things!* From all which it sufficiently appears, how impossible it is for any truly sincere and well-meaning person to be guilty of This Malignity, or to have any reason of apprehending he can possibly have fallen into it.

5ly; THE next Cause of Trouble, to the Minds of some pious and melancholy persons, are *Wicked and Blasphemous Thoughts*; which because they cannot but detest and abhor, therefore they are apt to imagine them to be very sinful; and the more sinful they think them,

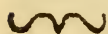
S E R M.  
XIV.  


S E R M. them, and the more they are afraid of  
XIV. them, the more apt they are to return.

Now in reality, for this very reason, because they detest and abhor them, and are afraid of them, and cannot avoid them; for this very reason (I say) so far are they from being great and crying Sins, or Tendencies towards the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, that in reality they are not so much as any Sin at all, but merely Weaknesses of Imagination arising from Infirmary of Body, and, if they be of any moral Consideration, they are on the contrary rather, by the Uneasiness which they cause, certain Signs of a tender Conscience and of a pious disposed Mind. For profligate and profane Persons, are not disturbed at such things as these. The proper Remedy, (next to the curing the Bodily Disorder,) is, to consider the true Nature of Sin; that all Sin, lies in the *Will* only; and consequently *those* Thoughts only can be sinful Thoughts, which are either Designs and Contrivances of Wickedness, or at least which take some Pleasure and Delight in the Imagination of it. But these which offer themselves involuntarily

tarily to the Imagination, not only without S E R M.  
any Delight, but with Abhorrence and XIV.  
Detestation; can no more be any Sin in   
the Person whom they disturb, than one  
man's accidentally seeing another's Wick-  
edness or hearing his Blasphemy, can be  
Sin in the Person that hears or sees it.  
God himself sees and hears all the Wick-  
edness that is done in the World; and yet  
it diminishes nothing from his infinite Pu-  
rity. And could melancholy pious persons  
once persuade themselves, that Thoughts,  
which they do not chuse, are (in the mo-  
ral Sense) not their own, and that they are  
to be slighted and neglected accordingly;  
this in all probability would soon effectually  
cure them and prevent their return;  
for the same reason, as too much Fear and  
Dread of them, naturally causes them to  
be almost always present.

*Lastly*; THE last usual Cause of Trou-  
ble of Mind, is the Conscience of *past* great  
Sins, and of *present* remaining Infirmities.  
Now if by *Infirmities*, be meant such as are  
unavoidable; and, if not perfectly unavoid-  
able, yet such as are always incident even  
to good men; and always sincerely striven  
against;

S E R M.  
XIV.

against; and generally Omissions rather than Commissions; these are constantly allowed for in the whole Tenour of the Gospel, and the Forgiveness of them annexed to our daily Prayers. But if by *Infirmities* be meant *plain Transgressions* of God's Commands, and manifest Sins willingly chosen upon the offer of a Temptation; these are and ought to be such a Trouble of Mind, as nothing but effectual Repentance and Amendment can remove. Which Amendment when it has really taken place; then the Sorrow for what is past, may reasonably be relieved by the Assurance of Pardon. For though the great and principal Promise of Pardon, is made indeed to Unbelievers at their Conversion and being baptized; yet there is also sufficient encouragement given, even to relapsing Sinners to repent. Brethren, saith St James, *If any of you do err from the Truth, and one converteth him, Let him know, that he which converteth the Sinner from the Errour of his Way, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins*: And our Saviour threatens some very corrupt Christians, Rev. ii. 21; that

that because he gave them space to repent, S E R M.  
and they repented not, therefore he would XIV.  
cast them into a bed of Sickness, and kill  
their children with Death; yet still adding,  
except they repent of their deeds. And St.  
Paul, having severely punished a very  
wicked person among the Corinthians,  
yet at length writes to forgive and com-  
fort him, lest perhaps he should be swal-  
lowed up with overmuch Sorrow. And the  
Texts which seem to speak otherwise,  
yet have not really a different meaning.  
For when the Apostle says, 'tis impossible  
for them that fall away, to be renewed  
to Repentance; he does not mean to take  
away the Comfort of true Repentance, but  
to express the difficulty of bringing Apost-  
ates to such Repentance. And when he  
says there remains no more Sacrifice for  
Sin, he does not mean that true Penitents  
shall not be forgiven; but that those who  
by Apostacy reject the Sacrifice of Christ,  
can expect no new Sacrifice to be institu-  
ted for them. And when he says that  
profane Esau found no place for Repen-  
tance, though he sought it carefully with  
Tears; his meaning is This only, that the  
vain

S E R M. vain Sorrow and Prayers of Men continuing  
 XIV. Wicked, ( for he calls him profane, )  
 shall not move God to repent and reverse  
 their Sentence. And when St *John* speaks  
 of *a Sin unto Death*, he does not mean  
 that repentance cannot remedy it ; but that  
 some Sinners are as unlikely to *repent*, as  
 some Diseases of Body are unlikely to be  
*cured*.

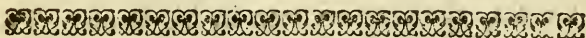
I SHALL conclude with this one practical consideration. If, where there is *no* real ground for trouble of Spirit, yet the mere Phantom of a deluded Imagination can be so terrible as men sometimes find it ; *What* then is the *reality* of God's insupportable Wrath, lying upon the mind of an impenitent and despairing Sinner ! Therefore take heed of real and habitual Wickedness.





# SERMON XV.

Of publickly Denouncing Curses  
upon Sinners.



DEUT. xxvii. 26.

*Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the  
words of this Law to do them ; And all  
the people shall say, Amen.*



THE Proper Design and Use SERMON  
XV.  
of all publick or private Sea-  
sons of Humiliation, is, to  
recollect and examine care-  
fully the State of our  
Lives; to confess our past Sins, with a  
just Sense of our own unworthiness in  
committing them ; humbly to ask pardon  
VOL. X. Z of

S E R M. of God, for the breaches of his Law we  
XV. have been guilty of ; to imprint upon our  
Minds a deep Sense, of the reasonableness  
and obligation of our Duty ; to acknowledge the Justice and Righteousness of God's indignation, denounced against impenitent Sinners ; and to form within ourselves strong and solemn Resolutions, of better obedience for the future. To this end it is, that the Law of God is held forth unto us, recommended with all the Blessings, and fenced in with all the Curses, that are written in his Book. To this end it is, that the Prophets in the *Old Testament*, and the Apostles in the *New*, represent unto us in such sublime expressions, the Happiness of Obedience ; and on the other hand set forth in such moving and affectionate descriptions, the wrath of God expressly revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men. To this end it is, that our Saviour has appointed his Ministers to continue, even unto the End of the World, perswading men to Repentance both by the Love of God, and by the Terrours of the Lord. Which as it is at  
all

all Times their perpetual Duty, so more <sup>S E R M.</sup> especially at such Seasons as are thought <sup>XV.</sup> proper to be set apart for Fasting and Humiliation. The proper and Christian Observation of which Times, does not consist in superstitious Distinctions of Meats, for which there is no foundation either in the Law of God or in the nature of things; but it consists in such general Abstinence, as every serious person finds by his own Experience best to promote the performance of his whole Christian Duty. In which matter, because the Temper and Constitution and other accidental circumstances of every particular person, are different from Others; therefore no general Rules can be given for all persons; but every one for himself must in particular, with the Prudence and Sobriety of a Christian, determine the Measure and Degrees of that Abstinence, which the Law of God *has not* determined, and the Laws or Customs of Men have in Reason *no Power* to determine. But *some things* there are, very proper for *all persons*, and wherein the *whole Church* may join without distinction: Such are,

S E R M. confessions of Sin, publick acknowledgments of the righteousness of God's Laws, and solemn Deprecations of his Judgments. Which Acts of Devotion, as they are *always* proper; So it has wisely been judged, that the performing them with greater *Solemnity*, at certain periods or seasons set apart for publick Humiliation; may be very advantagious and helpful, towards the keeping up a publick Spirit of Religion in a Nation. And there was the more reason so to judge, because God himself, when he brought the Children of *Israel* over *Jordan*, was pleased by an express Command to appoint the Blessings and Curses of the Law to be read in a solemn manner to the whole Body of the People; and that the People, at the repeating of each Curse, should, by way of *acknowledgment* of the *righteousness* and *reasonableness* of God's Judgments denounced against impenitent Sinners, distinctly and solemnly say, *Amen*. Of This we have a large account, in this xxviii<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Book of *Deuteronomy*; in which, from the 15<sup>th</sup> verse to the End, is set down a distinct Denunciation of the

Curse

Curse or Wrath of God, against several S E R M.  
*particular* Instances of great Wickedness; XV.  
 and it concludes or sums up all, with that  
 more *general* Denunciation in the words  
 of the Text, *Cursed be he that confirmeth  
 not all the words of this Law to do them;  
 and all the People shall say, Amen.* In  
 discoursing upon which words; because  
 they have sometimes by weak persons been  
 so misunderstood, as if by joyning with  
 or repeating this Curse, Men were in  
 danger of being led into some degree of  
 uncharitable censure, or to express any  
 hard Wish, against such persons as they  
 know to be guilty, or whom they see live  
 in the practice of any of those Crimes to  
 which the Curse is here annexed; I shall  
 therefore endeavour to show, 1<sup>st</sup>, That  
 the repeating the Curse in this and the  
 like Texts, is not expressing any unchari-  
 table *Wish*, or *desiring* that any Evil  
 should befall the Persons against whom  
 it is denounced; but only an *acknowledg-*  
*ment* of the *Reasonableness* of God's de-  
 nouncing such Threatnings in order to  
 bring men to Repentance, and a *confession*  
 of the *Justice and Righteousness* of God in

S E R M. punishing such as (notwithstanding those  
 XV. Threatnings) continue obstinately impenitent: And 2dly, I shall endeavour to show, That this publick acknowledgment of the Righteousness of God's Judgments upon impenitent Sinners, is very *reasonable* to be made in this manner by all Christians.


I. *First*; I AM to show, that the repeating the Curse in this and the like Texts, is not expressing any uncharitable *Wish*, or *desiring* that any Evil should befall the persons against whom it is denounced; but only an *acknowledgment* of the *Reasonableness* of God's denouncing such Threatnings in order to bring men to Repentance, and a *confession* of the *Justice and Righteousness of God* in punishing such as (notwithstanding those Threatnings) continue obstinately impenitent. And This will appear, both by a careful consideration of the words of the Text itself; and by comparing them with other expressions in Scripture, of the like import and signification. In the words of the Text itself, *Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them, and all the*



*the people shall say, Amen; 'tis observable* S E R M.  
in the first place, that in the very first XV.  
expression, *Cursed be he*, the word, *be*, is  
not in the original; and, for that reason,  
in our *English Translation*, is printed in  
a different character: So that the words  
might *as truly*, and indeed *more truly*,  
have been rendred, *Cursed is he*, or *Cursed*  
*shall be He, that confirmeth not all the*  
*words of this Law to do them.* Which  
is manifestly, not an expression of *Desire*,  
in him that pronounceth the words; but  
merely a declaration of *Truth*, that the  
Wrath of God is actually revealed against  
Sinners. And 'tis remarkable, that these  
very Words are expressly quoted by St  
*Paul* from this passage in *Deuteronomy*, ac-  
cording to *that latter manner of Rendring*;  
*Gal. iii. 10; As many, says he, as are of*  
*the Works of the Law, Are under the curse;*  
*For it is written, Cursed is every one that*  
*continueth not in all things which are*  
*written in the Book of the Law to do*  
*them.*

IN the next place; the same thing ap-  
pears from the use of the following word,  
*confirm; that confirmeth not all the words*

S E R M. of the Law to do them. For as He who

XV.  Obeys the Commandments of God, does not add thereby any Strength to the Law itself ; but yet is said in the Text to *confirm* it, only by *assenting* to the reasonableness of it in his *life and practice* : so He who *pronounceth* Those accursed, whom the Law of God hath expressly condemned ; doth neither thereby take upon himself any *Power* of passing censure on his brethren ; neither doth he express any *Wish or Desire* of his own ; but only makes *confession* of the Justice and Righteousness of God, in declaring his indignation against Sinners.

*Lastly* ; As to the following words, *and all the people shall say, Amen* ; 'tis to be observed, that this phrase has in Scripture *two* Significations. At the conclusion of *Prayers and Thanksgivings*, it signifies a *Wish or Desire, So be it* : But when it is added to an *Affertion or Declaration of Truth*, it signifies only an *Acknowledgment* of the *Truth and Certainty* of what is so declared. Thus when our Saviour uses the word, *Amen, Amen* ; as he does so frequently in St *John's Gospel* ;

it

it plainly signifies, as we rightly translate S E R M. it, Verily, Verily, *I say unto you* ; that is, XV. the words which I speak, shall *certainly and assuredly* be accomplished. And when St Paul tells us, 2 Cor. i. 20, that *all the Promises of God, in Him, are Yea and Amen* ; his meaning is evident, that they are sure, infallible, and to be entirely depended upon. And when our Saviour declares concerning himself, Rev. i. 18 ; *Behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen* ; 'tis manifest, the word, [*Amen*,] does not there express any *Wish* or *Desire*, (which would have been very improper in That place ; ) but 'tis a strong *assertion* of the infallibility of That Truth, that he is *alive for evermore*. And the Character by which the Spirit describes him, Rev. iii. 14 ; *these things saith the Amen*, is distinctly explained in the words next following, *the faithful and true Witness*. From these Uses of the word, *Amen*, in Scripture ; it appears very clearly, that if the *former* part of the Text be rendred ( as it may well be ) not, *curst* be *he*, but, *curst* is *he*, *that confirmeth not all the words of This Law to do them* ; the meaning

SERMONing of the *latter* part, and let all the  
 XV. people say *Amen*, will be *This* only; let  
 the people publickly profess their acquiescence in, and acknowledgment of, the Justice and Righteousness of the divine Threatnings. And *This* Sense of the words is the more certain, because in the Book of *Jeremy*, where the words of the Text are again repeated, *Cursed be*, (or, *Cursed is*) *the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant*, Jer. xi. 3; the Prophet immediately replies, ver. 5, *Then answered I, and said, Amen, O Lord*; Which Reply being made by him of his own accord, and without any Command; shows plainly that the word, [*Amen*], ought not there to have been rendred, as in the form of a severe condemnatory Prayer, *So be it*; but, as a form of acquiescence only in God's righteous Sentence, *Even so, O Lord, Righteous and True are thy judgments*.

AND thus much, from the consideration of the expressions used in the *Text itself*. The same thing will appear further, by comparing these with other ways of speaking used in Scripture, of the like  
 import

import and signification. In the last words S E R M. XV. that *Jacob* spake to his Sons, *Gen. xlix*, we find This expression concerning *Simeon and Levi*, ver. 7; *Cursed be their Anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel.* It cannot be imagined that *Jacob* intended to *curse* his Sons, or bring any *imprecation* upon them, as of his own Desire; but the words are only a declaration of what he was inspired to foresee *would* come upon them hereafter: And therefore in the very same verse he changes his style, and goes on in the Prophetick manner of speaking; not, do Thou *divide* them, but, *I will* (says he) *divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* And This, (especially if we consider that it was to take place, not so much in *Themselves* as in their *Posterity*,) leads us to the true explication of those many Passages in the *Psalms*, which in our *Translation* seem to be expressed in the form of Curses or Imprecations, but in the *Original* are plain Predictions only of future Events. To give One instance out of Many: *Pf. cix. 8; Let his days be few, and let another take his Office; Let his children be fatherless,*

S E R M.

XV.

*less, and his Wife a Widow.* These words being spoken by the Psalmist, not as a *private* person, concerning his own particular Enemies, but as a *Prophet* concerning Him who was to betray our Lord; are plainly, not an *imprecation*, but a *prediction*: And almost all the like expressions in the whole Book of *Psalms*, carry with them sufficient Marks, of their being intended only as prophetical denunciations of the Wrath of God, against prophane Men and Enemies of Religion in all future Generations. Again: *Deut. xxvii. 12*; When *Moses* commanded six of the Tribes to stand upon Mount *Gerizim* to *bless the people*, 'tis added in the next verse that the other six should stand upon Mount *Ebal* to *curse*: He does not continue to speak in the same phrase, that as the one were to *bless the people*, so the other should *curse the people*; but only that they should stand upon *Mount Ebal* to *curse*; that is, to publish aloud the denunciations of God's Wrath against Sinners, and the Threatnings of what calamities *Would* certainly befall that nation if they departed from God. And This is what  
*Moses*




*Moses himself often did in a more vehement manner and with more solemn words, than when it was expressed barely in the form of a Curse: Deut. iv. 25; When you shall corrupt yourselves, and do evil in the Sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to Anger; I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land: and ch. viii. 19; If thou forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other Gods, I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish.* From this form of expression, which is really much more vehement and emphatical, than that in the Text, and yet manifestly contains nothing of *imprecation* in it, but merely a *warning* to deter men from Apostacy; 'tis evident that the words of the Text, though expressed in the form of an imprecation, yet must of necessity be understood in no other sense, than as a *like warning* to deter men from Sin. And This is the more evident, because both from the places now cited, and from the whole *Book of Deuteronomy*, it appears, that all the Curses in that Book were denounced not only against wicked persons  
*then*

S E R M. *then present, but also in all succeeding ge-*  
 XV. *nerations; with respect to whom, 'tis plain*  
 they could be understood no otherwise,  
 than as *comminatory Exhortations*. For  
 as the Apostle declares concerning the  
*Blessing*, Acts ii. 39; that the Promise was  
 to *Them* and to *their Children*, and to  
 them that are *afar off*, even as many as the  
*Lord our God shall call*; so *Moses* expressly  
 declares concerning the *Curse* likewise,  
 (*Deut. xxix. 14, 15, 19; and iv. 25;*)  
*Neither with you only do I make this Co-*  
*venant and this Oath; But with him that*  
*standeth here with us this day, and also with*  
*him that is not here with us this day; For*  
*when thou shalt beget children, and childrens*  
*children, and shalt have remained long in the*  
*land; and it come to pass that one heareth*  
*the words of this Curse, and despiseth it;*  
*the Lord will not spare that man, but all*  
*the Curses that are written in this book*  
*shall lie upon him.* The Meaning is evi-  
 dent: If any man despises the *Threatnings*  
 of God, instead of being moved by them  
 to Repentance; upon *Him* shall those  
 Threatnings finally be executed.

IN the *New Testament* likewise, we S E R M. sometimes meet with the same manner of XV. speaking. *Rom. ii. 8, 9; Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and Wrath: Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* In the original, 'tis expressed as an entire Sentence of itself, *Indignation and Wrath be upon them*: But yet, from the whole scope of *St Paul's* discourse, 'tis plain his intention was nothing more, than as if he had only in one continued Sentence gone on with the fore-going declaratory manner of speaking; *God will render to every man according to his deeds; To them that patiently continue in well-doing, eternal life; but to them that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.*

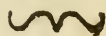
THE Apostles were intrusted by our Saviour, with the Doctrine of Life and Death; with delivering to men the Terms, upon which their Sins should be forgiven or not forgiven; *Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained:*

Yet

S E R M. Yet when they *retained* any mens Sins,  
 XV. as in the case of shaking off the *dust of*  
 *their feet* against the unbelieving Cities;  
 'tis plain they did it not as an Act of *Power*, nor as a Signification of any *Will or Desire of their own*, that those people should be accursed; but, as our Saviour himself expresses it, *Mar. vi. 11*; 'twas to be *for a Testimony against them*, a *Protestation* of their unworthiness to receive the Gospel: just as *Moses testified* against the children of *Israel* in the passages before-cited; and as *St Paul* against certain wicked persons among the *Thessalonians*, *1 Eph. iv. 6*; *The Lord is the avenger of all such*; as we have also fore-warned you, and testified; and as *St John*, against any man that should corrupt his Prophecies in the Revelation, *ch. xxii. 18*; *I testify*, saith he, unto every such person, that *God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book*. From all these parallel passages it abundantly appears, that the solemnly repeating the Curse in the Text, or any other the like denunciations in Scripture, is not expressing any uncharitable *Wish*, or *desiring* that any Evil

2

should



should befall the persons against whom it is denounced; but only an *acknowledgment* of the *Reasonableness* of God's denouncing such Threatnings in order to bring men to Repentance, and a *confession* of the *Justice and Righteousness* of God in punishing such as (notwithstanding those Threatnings) continue obstinately impenitent. It remains that I proceed to show briefly in the

II. *Second Place*, that such a publick acknowledgment of the Righteousness of God's Judgments upon impenitent Sinners, is very *reasonable* to be *made in this manner* by all Christians. And This is extremely evident from what has been already said. For since reciting the Curses written in Scripture, is not *wishing* or *desiring* any Evil to any man; but the reason of *continuing* to recite them, is only the same as the reason of God's *first commanding* them to be written; namely, to move both those that *hear* them, to repent; and to convince those that *recite* them, of the necessity of avoiding those Crimes, against which they acknowledge with their own Mouths the Curse of God to be due; 'tis



S E R M. very plain, that this is not doing *Hurt*,  
 XV. but *Good*, to our Neighbours; being indeed nothing else, than *fore-warning* them of a Danger, in order to their *escaping* it. The *righteousness* of the Law of God, is attested to by the natural Sense of every man's own conscience; even *the Gentiles which have not the Law*, being a Law *unto themselves*, and showing the work of the Law written in their hearts. The judgment of God therefore, against them who commit such things as their own consciences condemn, is according to Truth, Rom. ii. 2; that is, 'tis according to *Right and Equity*; as the Phrase is afterwards explained, ver. 5; where 'tis stiled more expressly *the revelation of the righteous judgment of God*: *Righteous*, in condemning those only, who must by all men be confessed to be worthy of *Death*; (as St Paul expresses it,) Rom. i. 32; who knowing the judgment of God, (in the original, *the just judgment of God*,) that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them; or, (as it is found in some of the most ancient Copies,) who  
 knowing



*knowing the righteous judgment of God, S E R M. XV.*  
*yet do not consider, that they who do such*  
*things are worthy of Death, and not only*  
*They that do them themselves, but they also*  
*who countenance others that do them. Now*  
*what the Equity of the Thing itself thus*  
*compels every man's conscience secretly*  
*to acknowledge within him, the Glory*  
*of God and the Benefit of Men makes it*  
*reasonable should be publicly professed*  
*before the World; that God may be justi-*  
*fied in his saying, and clear when he is*  
*judged, (Ps. li. 4;) and that Men may be*  
*moved to Repent, by considering that, if*  
*they do it not, they will have no Apology*  
*to make for themselves, but every mouth*  
*will be stopped before God, Rom. iii. 19;*  
*and at the day of judgment it will be*  
*said to every impenitent person, Thine*  
*own Mouth condemneth thee, and not I,*  
*yea thine own lips testify against thee; Job*  
*xv. 6. Not that by making such Profes-*  
*sion, any man shall be more liable to be*  
*condemned, than if he made it not; but*  
*that the righteousness of God's Judgment*  
*shall be manifested in condemning men*  
*for such things only, as either they them-*  
*Vol. X. A a 2 selves*

S E R M. selves professed, or (which is the same  
 XV. thing) could not deny, to be worthy of  
 ~~~~~ Death. By which Phrase, being worthy  
 of Death, 'tis not to be understood only,
 that such Crimes *may* be so punished *with-*
out any Injustice; but also that 'tis *neces-*
sary, in the government of the World,
 that they *should be* so punished. God him-
 self therefore, the infinitely good and
 merciful Governour of the Universe, pro-
 nounces Curses against the wicked, not as
 taking any *Delight* so to do; but the
 Scripture always represents him doing it,
 as *unwillingly*, as with *reluctance*, and as
 his *strange Work*; Isaiah xxviii. 21. And
 our Saviour also *himself*, who loved us,
 and gave himself for us, and laid down
 his own Life to redeem us from Death;
 yet even *He* shall say, to those who im-
 penitently reject his gracious Offers of
 Life, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into e-*
verlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and
his Angels; Matt. xxv. 41. And, in the
 presence of the Holy Angels, and in the
 presence of the Lamb, who assuredly can
 take no pleasure in beholding any Punish-
 ment but what is necessary, *shall they be*
 tormented

tormented with Fire and Brimstone; Rev. S E R M. xiv. 10. And the Saints in Heaven, who XV.

are far from having in them any Revenge, or any Uncharitableness, but only a right Sense of the necessary administration of Justice in God's Kingdom, are described after the following manner, Rev. xix. 1 ; *I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven saying, Allelujah, Salvation and Glory and Honour and Power unto the Lord our God ; For true and righteous are his judgments ; for he hath judged the great Whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornication ; and hath avenged the Blood of his Servants at her hand : And again, (ch. xvi. 5 ;) I heard the Angel of the Waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus ; For they have shed the blood of Saints and Prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy ; And I heard another out of the altar say, even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. The Sense of all these places is nothing else, but that 'tis reasonable all the World should make acknowledgment of the Righteous-*

S E R M.

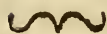
XV.

ness of God's judgments ; and of the necessity there is in the nature of Things, and in the Government of God, that Wickedness should finally be destroyed. And though it be in great Variety of Expression, that the Scripture sets forth this Truth ; yet by comparing the several expressions one with another, 'tis plain they all terminate only in the same Thing. What *Solomon* thus expresses, *Prov. xvii. 15 ; He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, they Both are an abomination to the Lord ;* is in the Prophet *Isaiab* thus, *ch. v. 23 ; Wo unto them which justify the wicked, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him ;* and *Prov. xxiv. 24 ;* in a still more severe manner of speaking, *He that saith unto the wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.* Yet the meaning of all these places, is still evidently One and the same ; And the Nations cursing such a person, plainly signifies nothing more, than an universal acknowledgment of the Reasonableness and Necessity of the Threatnings denounced of God against him.


him. In the Book of *Habakkuk*, the figure is carried still higher, *ch. ii. 11, 12*; The very Stone shall cry out of the Wall, and the beam out of the Timber shall answer it; *Wo to Him that buildeth a Town with Blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity*: And in that pathetical expression of our Saviour, *Luke xix. 40*; if These should hold their peace, the Stones would immediately cry out: 'Tis a highly figurative and very elegant manner, of expressing only the *Reasonableness and Necessity* of the Thing to be done. And because the Design and End of *All* these ways of speaking in Scripture, is *This* only, to convince men of the necessity of coming to Repentance, of reforming their manners, and of obeying the Law of God; 'tis therefore very evident, that as showing men the Penalties threatned in *humane Laws*, is a kind and friendly office, as only giving them *warning* in what manner to *avoid* them; so reciting, with the same intention, the *Curses of God* set forth in Scripture against all impenitent Sinners, is likewise doing, not *Hurt*, but *Good*, to our Neighbours.

SERM.

XV.



THE only *Inference* I shall draw at this Time from what has been said, and wherewith I shall conclude, is This; that if, when the *general* Denunciations of the Wrath of God against Sinners are recited, there be and ought to be a great Tenderness used in applying them *in particular*; and the Design of repeating them publickly upon solemn occasions of Humiliation, is, that every man may apply them seriously to his *own* conscience, and not that any man should judge his *Brother*; (For *who art Thou that judgest another man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth* :) From hence we may learn the extreme Wickedness of Those mens *pretended Catholick Religion*, who presumptuously taking it for granted, that All who receive not their absurd Doctrines, shall be eternally punished by God; take upon them to anticipate that unrighteous Sentence, which they profanely pass in the Seat of God; and destroy mens *Bodies* for no other Reason, but because they have first with impious and antichristian Uncharitableness presumed to give judgment of condemnation

demnation against their Souls. Come out S E R M.
of her, my people, that ye be not partakers XV.
of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her 
plagues; For in her is found the blood of
Prophets and of Saints, and of all that are
slain upon the Earth.

The End of VOL. X.



A TABLE of the several Texts of Scripture Preached upon in the Ten foregoing Volumes of SERMONS.

| <i>Texts.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Genes.</i> XVIII. 19. ——— | <i>III.</i> | 83. |
| <i>Exod.</i> XXI. 14. ——— | <i>X.</i> | 199. |
| <i>Levit.</i> XIX. 12. ——— | <i>VIII.</i> | 65. |
| <i>Deut.</i> XXVII. 26. ——— | <i>X.</i> | 337. |
| XXIX. 29. ——— | <i>VI.</i> | 131. |
| <i>1 Sam.</i> XV. 23. ——— | <i>X.</i> | 265. |
| <i>1 Kings</i> VIII. 27. ——— | <i>I.</i> | 169. |
| <i>Job</i> V. 6, 7. ——— | <i>VI.</i> | 227, 249, 273. |
| VI. 4. ——— | <i>X.</i> | 311. |
| XIII. 16. ——— | <i>X.</i> | 219. |
| XXIII. 15. ——— | <i>II.</i> | 119. |
| XXXIV. 10, 11, 12. ——— | <i>I.</i> | 369, 393. |
| XXXVII. 16. ——— | <i>I.</i> | 247. |
| <i>Pfalm</i> IV. 6. ——— | <i>IX.</i> | 343. |
| XVI. 9, 10. ——— | <i>V.</i> | 321. |

A Table of the several Texts

| Texts. | | Vol. | Page. |
|----------------|-------------------|-------|-----------|
| <i>Pſalm</i> | XXXIII. 10. ——— | VI. | 361. |
| | CXLV. 9. ——— | I. | 321. |
| | CXLVII. 5. ——— | I. | 197, 221. |
| <i>Prov.</i> | IX. 10, 11. ——— | II. | 139. |
| | X. 9. ——— | VIII. | 267. |
| | XIII. 21. ——— | VI. | 319. |
| | XIV. 9. ——— | III. | 371. |
| | XVI. 4. ——— | VII. | 299. |
| | XXIV. 28, 29. ——— | X. | 151. |
| <i>Ecclef.</i> | VIII. 11. ——— | I. | 347. |
| | IX. 11. ——— | VI. | 295. |
| <i>Iſai.</i> | V. 20. ——— | VII. | 133. |
| | IX. 6. ——— | V. | 21. |
| <i>Jer.</i> | V. 4. ——— | X. | 291. |
| <i>Dan.</i> | VII. 23. ——— | VI. | 341. |
| | XII. 10. ——— | III. | 29. |
| <i>Mal.</i> | I. 11. ——— | V. | 87. |
| | III. 6. ——— | I. | 143. |
| <i>Matt.</i> | I. 22, 23. ——— | V. | I. |
| | III. 12. ——— | VIII. | 111. |
| | IV. 1. ——— | VI. | 179, 203. |
| | IV. 10. ——— | I. | 25, 45. |
| | V. 3. ——— | III. | 259. |
| | V. 48. ——— | VI. | 393. |
| | VI. 10. ——— | II. | 331. |
| | VI. 31, 32. ——— | X. | I. |
| | VI. 33. ——— | II. | 355, 381. |
| | XII. 31, 32. ——— | VI. | I. |

of Scripture preached upon.

Texts. *Vol.* *Page.*

| | | |
|----------------------|-------|-----------|
| XII. 39, 40. ——— | V. | 109, 131. |
| XVI. 21, 22, 23. ——— | VIII. | 387. |
| XVI. 26. ——— | VII. | 69. |
| XXII. 11, 12. ——— | VII. | 29. |
| XXII. 37, 38. ——— | II. | 93. |
| XXII. 40. ——— | VII. | 163. |
| XXIII. 9. ——— | II. | 49. |

| | | |
|----------------------------|------|------|
| <i>Matt.</i> XXIV. 12. ——— | IX. | 139. |
| XXV. 46. ——— | VII. | 391. |
| XXVIII. 18, 19, 20. ——— | VI. | 79. |

| | | |
|-------------------------|------|--------|
| <i>Mar.</i> II. 17. ——— | III. | 167. |
| II. 27. ——— | X. | 45. |
| XVI. 16. ——— | IV. | 1, 27. |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|
| <i>Luke</i> VI. 44. ——— | III. | 123. |
| VIII. 15. ——— | X. | 67. |
| XI. 35. ——— | III. | 103. |
| XIV. 11. ——— | III. | 207, 233. |
| XIV. 14. ——— | IX. | 117. |
| XIV. 23. ——— | VII. | 1. |
| XVI. 25. ——— | VII. | 257. |
| XVI. 31. ——— | VIII. | 131. |
| XVII. 1. ——— | VI. | 421. |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------|
| <i>John</i> III. 16. ——— | II. | 189, 211. |
| IV. 11. ——— | VII. | 185. |
| IV. 24. ——— | I. | 93, 171. |
| VI. 44. ——— | III. | 61. |
| VIII. 32. ——— | III. | 1. |
| VIII. 44. ——— | VIII. | 1. |
| XX. 29. ——— | VII. | 213. |

A Table of the several Texts

| Texts. | | Vol. | Page. |
|---------------|---------------------|-------|---------------------|
| | XXI. 22. ——— | VII. | 49. |
| <i>Acts.</i> | V. 3, 4. ——— | X. | 173. |
| | XI. 24. ——— | III. | 189. |
| | XVII. 31. ——— | VII. | 327. |
| | XIX. 2, 3. ——— | VI. | 29, 55. |
| <i>Rom.</i> | IV. 3. ——— | II. | 237. |
| | VI. 3, 4. ——— | IV. | 55. |
| | VII. 7. ——— | VIII. | 175. |
| | VII. 24, 25. ——— | VIII. | 411. |
| <i>Rom.</i> | VIII. 13. ——— | VIII. | 23. |
| | VIII. 16, 17. ——— | II. | 73. |
| | XII. 1. ——— | VII. | 113. |
| | XII. 12. ——— | IX. | 435. |
| | XIV. 17. ——— | VII. | 233. |
| <i>1 Cor.</i> | I. 13. ——— | IV. | 79. |
| | I. 21. ——— | IX. | 1, 23. |
| | I. 22, 23, 24. ——— | V. | 273. |
| | X. 31. ——— | II. | 1, 25. |
| | XI. 25, 27. ——— | IV. | 103, 127, 151, 177. |
| | XII. 4, 5, 6. ——— | VI. | 105. |
| | XIII. 3. ——— | III. | 281, 305. |
| | XV. 14. ——— | V. | 295. |
| | XV. 56, 57. ——— | V. | 155, 189, 213. |
| <i>2 Cor.</i> | III. 17, 18. ——— | V. | 389. |
| <i>Galat.</i> | II. 15, 16. ——— | X. | 95. |
| | II. 17. ——— | IX. | 159. |
| | IV. 4, 5. ——— | V. | 47, 65. |
| | IV. 22, 23, 24. ——— | X. | 243. |
| | VI. 7. ——— | VII. | 349, 369. |

Texts.

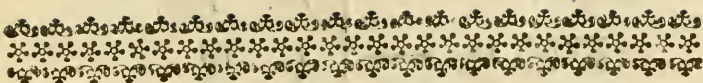
of Scripture preached upon.

| <i>Texts.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Ephes.</i> IV. 25. ————— | <i>VIII.</i> | 239. |
| IV. 32. ————— | <i>X.</i> | 23. |
| <i>Phil.</i> II. 12, 13. ———— | <i>II.</i> | 283, 305. |
| III. 20. ————— | <i>V.</i> | 365. |
| <i>Colos.</i> I. 24. ————— | <i>VIII.</i> | 319. |
| II. 3. ————— | <i>I.</i> | 273, 297. |
| III. 20, 21, 22. ———— | <i>III.</i> | 329. |
| <i>2Thes.</i> II. 11, 12. ———— | <i>VIII.</i> | 89. |
| <i>1Tim.</i> IV. 8. ————— | <i>IX.</i> | 363. |
| <i>2Tim.</i> II. 25. ————— | <i>III.</i> | 145. |
| III. 16. ————— | <i>VIII.</i> | 153. |
| <i>Titus</i> I. 2, 3. ————— | <i>IX.</i> | 47. |
| II. 11, 12. ———— | <i>II.</i> | 261. |
| <i>Heb.</i> II. 3, 4. ————— | <i>V.</i> | 245. |
| III. 13. ————— | <i>IX.</i> | 231, 259, 283. |
| VI. 1, 2. ————— | <i>IX.</i> | 67, 91. |
| VIII. 1. ————— | <i>V.</i> | 343. |
| XI. 6. ————— | <i>I.</i> | 1. |
| XII. 14. ————— | <i>VII.</i> | 93. |
| XII. 16, 17. ———— | <i>VIII.</i> | 43. |
| XII. 22, 23. ———— | <i>IV.</i> | 203, 225, 247. |
| <i>James</i> I. 14. ————— | <i>VIII.</i> | 217. |
| I. 15, 16. ————— | <i>II.</i> | 167. |
| III. 13. ————— | <i>X.</i> | 129. |

A Table of the several Texts, &c.

| Texts. | | Vol. | Page. |
|-------------|-------------------|-------|----------------|
| III. | 18. ————— | VIII. | 341. |
| IV. | 17, 18. ——— | VII. | 279. |
| <i>Job.</i> | II. 15. ————— | III. | 351. |
| | III. 9. ————— | IX. | 311. |
| | III. 20, 21. ——— | VIII. | 199. |
| | V. 8. ————— | VI. | 157. |
| <i>Jude</i> | 22, 23. ——— | IX. | 411. |
| <i>Rev.</i> | I. 8. ————— | I. | 69. |
| | II. 7. ————— | IX. | 389. |
| | II. 29. ————— | IV. | 323, 347, 373. |
| | III. 4. ————— | IV. | 271, 297. |
| | III. 15, 16. ——— | IV. | 399. |
| | XXII. 11, 12. ——— | IX. | 179, 205. |
| | XXII. 14. ——— | VIII. | 297. |





An INDEX of the several Texts of Scripture explained in the foregoing Ten Volumes of SERMONS.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>Genesis</i> I, 27. ——— | II, | 174 |
| II, 8. ——— | IX, | 391 |
| II, 9. ——— | VIII, | 300 |
| III, 22. ——— | VIII, | 301 |
| III, 24. ——— | VIII, | 301 |
| V, 22. ——— | I, | 8 |
| V, 24. ——— | VIII, | 270 |
| VI, 9. ——— | I, | 8 |
| ——— | VIII, | 270 |
| ——— | IX, | 118 |
| XIV, 18. ——— | X, | 252 |
| XVII, 1. ——— | IX, | 105 |
| XVII, 5. ——— | VIII, | 388 |
| XVII, 8. ——— | I, | 74 |
| XIX, 22. ——— | IX, | 58, 338 |
| XXII, 1. ——— | VI, | 214 |
| XXV, 34. ——— | VIII, | 49 |
| XXVIII, 20. ——— | X, | 196 |
| XXXII, 24. ——— | VII, | 9 |
| XXXIV, 14. ——— | IX, | 338 |
| XXXVIII, 11. ——— | VII, | 4 |
| XLVI, 27. ——— | II, | 143 |
| XLIX, 7. ——— | X, | 347 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| | XLIX, 10. ——— | V, | 66 |
| | XLIX, 26. ——— | I, | 74 |
| <i>Exodus</i> | IV, 21. ——— | IV, | 387 |
| | XX, 11. ——— | X, | 50 |
| | XXI, 6. ——— | I, | 75 |
| | XXI, 13. ——— | VI, | 246 |
| | XXIII, 13. ——— | V, | 90 |
| | XXIII, 20. ——— | V, | 94 |
| | XXIV, 5. ——— | V, | 92 |
| <i>Levit.</i> | XVIII, 21. ——— | V, | 90 |
| | XIX, 14. ——— | VI, | 424 |
| <i>Numb.</i> | IV, 6. ——— | II, | 152 |
| | X, 8. ——— | I, | 74 |
| | XIV, 22. ——— | X, | 188 |
| | XVI, 29. ——— | I, | 400 |
| | XXI, 2. ——— | X, | 196 |
| | XXIII, 19. ——— | I, | 154 |
| | XXIV, 20. ——— | I, | 75 |
| <i>Deut.</i> | II, 30. ——— | IV, | 387 |
| | VI, 25. ——— | IV, | 319 |
| | VIII, 2. ——— | V, | 117 |
| | XII, 5. ——— | V, | 90 |
| | XIII, 16. ——— | I, | 75 |
| | XXVII, 12. ——— | X, | 348 |
| | XXVII, 18. ——— | VI, | 424 |
| | XXVII, 26. ——— | X, | 346 |
| | XXIX, 4. ——— | III, | 76 |
| | ————— | VIII, | 105 |
| | ————— | IX, | 60 |
| | XXIX, 18. ——— | VII, | 382 |
| | XXX, 15. ——— | IV, | 359 |
| | XXXII, 9. ——— | X, | 103 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>Joshua</i> VII, 19. ——— | II, 15 | |
| XI, 20. ——— | III, 54 | |
| <i>Judges</i> IX, 23. ——— | III, 53 | |
| <i>1 Sam.</i> II, 3. ——— | II, 232 | |
| II, 25. ——— | IV, 386 | |
| II, 30. ——— | VIII, 351 | |
| III, 13. ——— | I, 75 | |
| XV, 22. ——— | IX, 437 | |
| XV, 23. ——— | X, 272 | |
| XV, 29. ——— | I, 78 | |
| XXV, 38. ——— | IV, 386 | |
| XXVIII, 23. ——— | VII, 4 | |
| <i>2 Sam.</i> XIX, 22. ——— | VIII, 396 | |
| XXIV, 1. ——— | IV, 390 | |
| <i>1 Kings</i> VIII, 30. ——— | I, 185 | |
| XXII, 19. ——— | III, 53 | |
| <i>2 Kings</i> IV, 8. ——— | VII, 5 | |
| XVII, 14. ——— | IV, 49 | |
| <i>1 Chron.</i> XXI, 1. ——— | IV, 390 | |
| <i>2 Chron.</i> XIV, 12. ——— | IV, 387 | |
| XX, 20. ——— | IV, 43 | |
| <i>Esther</i> VII, 5. ——— | X, 187 | |
| <i>Job</i> IV, 18. ——— | I, 281 | |
| XI, 12. ——— | I, 280 | |
| XIII, 7, 15. ——— | X, 221 | |
| XIX, 23. ——— | V, 220 | |
| | B b 2 | |
| | | XIX, |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Vol.</i> | <i>Vol. Page.</i> |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| XIX, 25. ——— | V, 325 |
| XXII, 14. ——— | IX, 180 |
| XXVII, 5. ——— | X, 220 |
| XXVIII, 28. ——— | II, 151 |
| XXXVIII, 7. — | II, 512 |
| XXXVIII, 16. — | VI, 141 |
| <i>Psalms</i> I, 1. ——— | VIII, 81 |
| ————— | III, 378 |
| IX, 10. ——— | V, 93 |
| XVI, 10. ——— | V, 299 |
| XIX, 1. ——— | II, 9 |
| ————— | III, 378. |
| XX, 2. ——— | V, 93 |
| XXVI, 6. ——— | VII, 357 |
| XXX, 12. ——— | V, 324 |
| XXXVI, 7. ——— | VIII, 284 |
| XLIV, 20. ——— | V, 90 |
| LVI, 8. ——— | I, 255 |
| LVII, 9. ——— | V, 324 |
| LXXVI, 1, 2. — | X, 103 |
| LXXXIV, 7. — | V, 409 |
| LXXXIX, 21. — | I, 156 |
| LXXXIX, 47. — | V, 329 |
| XC, 2. ——— | I, 146 |
| XCI, 1. ——— | X, 149 |
| XCV, 9. ——— | VI, 77 |
| XCV, 8, 9, 10. | IX, 234 |
| XCVIII, 9. ——— | I, 387 |
| CII, 26. ——— | I, 146 |
| CVI, 26. ——— | I, 360 |
| CIX, 8. ——— | X, 348 |
| CXXXV, 4. ——— | X, 103 |
| CXXXIX, 9. — | I, 195 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| <i>Prov.</i> | I, 32. ——— | <i>III,</i> | 234 |
| | VII, 26. ——— | <i>VI,</i> | 333 |
| | XI, 31. ——— | <i>VII,</i> | 296 |
| | XIV, 34. ——— | <i>IX,</i> | 375 |
| | XVI, 4. ——— | <i>IV,</i> | 385 |
| | XVII, 4. ——— | <i>X,</i> | 39 |
| | XXIII, 17. ——— | <i>VI,</i> | 323 |
| | XXIV, 16. ——— | <i>IX,</i> | 135 |
| | XXVI, 18. ——— | <i>X,</i> | 155 |
| | XXVII, 20. ——— | <i>V,</i> | 329 |
| | XXVIII, 14. — | <i>II,</i> | 316 |
| | XXX, 15. ——— | <i>V,</i> | 329 |
| <i>Eccles.</i> | I, 14. ——— | <i>IX,</i> | 146 |
| | II, 13. ——— | <i>III,</i> | 30 |
| | V, 1. ——— | <i>I,</i> | 185 |
| | V, 8. ——— | <i>I,</i> | 210 |
| | VIII, 11. ——— | <i>X,</i> | 187. |
| | IX, 10. ——— | <i>VI,</i> | 297 |
| | XI, 5. ——— | <i>I,</i> | 283 |
| | XII, 13. ——— | <i>VI,</i> | 145 |
| | ————— | <i>VIII,</i> | 269 |
| <i>Isaiab</i> | I, 11. ——— | <i>I,</i> | 126 |
| | II, 22. ——— | <i>I,</i> | 87 |
| | V, 20. ——— | <i>III,</i> | 241 |
| | VII, 13. ——— | <i>V,</i> | 17 |
| | XI, 6. ——— | <i>IX,</i> | 378 |
| | XIV, 12. ——— | <i>VI,</i> | 147 |
| | XIX, 14. ——— | <i>IV,</i> | 390 |
| | XXIX, 13. ——— | <i>II,</i> | 64 |
| | XXXIII, 15, 16. | <i>VIII,</i> | 285 |
| | XLV, 7. ——— | <i>VI,</i> | 245 |
| | XLVI, 6, 7. ——— | <i>I,</i> | 232 |
| | LXII, 7. ——— | <i>VII,</i> | 9 |
| | LXIII, 17. ——— | <i>IV,</i> | 389 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Jerem.</i> | IV, 10. ——— | IV, | 390 |
| | VII, 22. ——— | I, | 127 |
| | ——— | X, | 9 |
| | XI, 3, 5. ——— | X, | 346 |
| | XV, 17. ——— | III, | 378 |
| | XVIII, 7. ——— | I, | 162 |
| | XXXI, 3. ——— | III, | 378 |
| | XLVIII, 11. ——— | VI, | 280 |
| <i>Ezek.</i> | XIII, 9. ——— | IV, | 254 |
| | XIV, 9. ——— | VIII, | 108 |
| | XX, 27. ——— | VIII, | 354 |
| | XXXII, 31. ——— | II, | 112 |
| <i>Daniel</i> | III, 25. ——— | II, | 52 |
| | V, 20. ——— | III, | 244 |
| | VII, 10. ——— | I, | 255 |
| | VII, 25. ——— | II, | 67 |
| | IX, 24. ——— | V, | 70 |
| | XI, 38. ——— | I, | 59 |
| | XII, 3. ——— | I, | 394 |
| | XII, 10. ——— | IV, | 391 |
| <i>Hosea</i> | VI, 6. ——— | X, | 9 |
| | XI, 4. ——— | III, | 71 |
| <i>Amos</i> | III, 6. ——— | VI, | 247 |
| <i>Jonah</i> | II, 2. ——— | I, | 193 |
| | III, 4. ——— | VI, | 185 |
| <i>Micah</i> | IV, 5. ——— | V, | 89 |
| <i>Habbak.</i> | III, 6. ——— | I, | 74. |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Haggai.</i> II, 6, 7. ————— | <i>V,</i> | 68 |
| <i>Malac.</i> I, 2, 3. ————— | <i>X,</i> | 8 |
| III, 5. ————— | <i>VIII,</i> | 122 |
| III, 16. ————— | <i>I,</i> | 255 |
|
 | | |
| <i>Matt.</i> I, 19. ————— | <i>IX,</i> | 125 |
| II, 16. ————— | <i>VII,</i> | 360 |
| III, 9. ————— | <i>VIII,</i> | 423 |
| III, 11. ————— | <i>VI,</i> | 53 |
| III, 14. ————— | <i>VI,</i> | 188 |
| IV, 4. ————— | <i>VI,</i> | 222 |
| V, 16. ————— | <i>III,</i> | 166 |
| V, 19. ————— | <i>II,</i> | 264 |
| ————— | <i>IX,</i> | 172 |
| V, 21. ————— | <i>X,</i> | 206 |
| 21, 22. ——— | <i>X,</i> | 116 |
| V, 22, 29. ——— | <i>V,</i> | 330 |
| V, 23. ————— | <i>IV,</i> | 171 |
| V, 28. ————— | <i>I,</i> | 256 |
| V, 48. ————— | <i>II,</i> | 181 |
| VI, 22. ————— | <i>VII,</i> | 150 |
| ————— | <i>V,</i> | 377 |
| VI, 24. ————— | <i>II,</i> | 112 |
| ————— | <i>X,</i> | 6 |
| ————— | <i>X,</i> | 228 |
| VI, 25, 26. ——— | <i>II,</i> | 358 |
| VI, 34. ————— | <i>X,</i> | 6 |
| VII, 11. ————— | <i>VI,</i> | 187 |
| VII, 14. ————— | <i>VII,</i> | 293 |
| VII, 16. ————— | <i>X,</i> | 228 |
| VII, 21. ————— | <i>I,</i> | 389 |
| VIII, 10. ————— | <i>IV,</i> | 41 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| VIII, 20. ——— | IX, | 381 |
| X, 5, ——— | X, | 11 |
| X, 15. ——— | VII, | 238 |
| X, 24, 28. ——— | VII, | 74 |
| X, 28. ——— | V, | 330 |
| X, 37. ——— | IV, | 321 |
| X, 41. ——— | I, | 395 |
| XI, 6. ——— | V, | 283 |
| XI, 12. ——— | VII, | 5 |
| XI, 17, 18. ——— | VI, | 320 |
| XI, 17. ——— | IV, | 351 |
| XI, 23. ——— | II, | 58 |
| ————— | V, | 331 |
| XI, 25. ——— | III, | 48 |
| XII, 23, 24, &c. ——— | VI, | 14 |
| XII, 36. ——— | VIII, | 67 |
| ————— | X, | 171 |
| XII, 39. ——— | V, | 280 |
| XIII, 4. ——— | VI, | 435 |
| XIII, 10. ——— | X, | 70 |
| XIII, 12. ——— | IV, | 353 |
| XIII, 13. ——— | IV, | 379 |
| XIII, 20. ——— | IX, | 152 |
| XIII, 23. ——— | X, | 88 |
| XIII, 41. ——— | VII, | 238 |
| XIII, 49. ——— | IX, | 117 |
| XIII, 51. ——— | X, | 68 |
| XIII, 58. ——— | IV, | 379 |
| XIV, 22. ——— | VII, | 2 |
| XV, 4. ——— | III, | 434 |
| XV, 9. ——— | X, | 233 |
| XV, 24. ——— | X, | 10 |
| ————— | I, | 128 |
| XV, 28. ——— | IV, | 41 |
| XVI, 1. ——— | V, | 148. |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| XVI, | 6. ————— | X, | 227 |
| XVI, | 15, 16. ——— | V, | 177 |
| XVI, | 17, 18, 19. | VIII, | 388 |
| XVI, | 18. ————— | V, | 332 |
| | ————— | VI, | 104 |
| XVI, | 19. ————— | VI, | 94 |
| XVI, | 23. ————— | VIII, | 397 |
| XVII, | 29. ————— | VII, | 360 |
| XVIII, | 6, 7, 10. | VI, | 428 |
| XVIII, | 6. ————— | III, | 240 |
| XVIII, | 8. ————— | VI, | 444 |
| XVIII, | 17. ————— | X, | 161 |
| XVIII, | 20. ————— | VI, | 89 |
| XVIII, | 22. ————— | X, | 11 |
| XVIII, | 35. ————— | IV, | 169 |
| XIX, | 23. ————— | VI, | 225 |
| XIX, | 24. ————— | VIII, | 327 |
| XIX, | 29. ————— | VIII, | 289 |
| XX, | 12. ————— | VI, | 262 |
| XX, | 18. ————— | VII, | 360 |
| XX, | 28. ————— | VIII, | 371 |
| XXII, | 2. ————— | VII, | 2 |
| XXII, | 10. ————— | VII, | 32 |
| XXII, | 11. ————— | IV, | 316 |
| XXII, | 17. ————— | X, | 226 |
| XXIII, | 9. ————— | II, | 64 |
| XXIII, | 14. ————— | I, | 399 |
| XXIII, | 15. ————— | V, | 330 |
| XXIII, | 25. ————— | X, | 234 |
| XXIII, | 29. ——— | X, | 223 |
| XXIII, | 33. ——— | V, | 330 |
| XXIII, | 34. ——— | VIII, | 97 |
| XXIV, | 22. ——— | VIII, | 331 |
| XXIV, | 24. ——— | VIII, | 106 |
| | ————— | IX, | 143 |
| XXIV, | 25. ——— | IX, | 156 |

XXIV,

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|

| | | | |
|--|---------------|------|-----|
| | XXIV, 30. — | V, | 29 |
| | XXV, 42. — | VII, | 394 |
| | XXVI, 24. — | VI, | 440 |
| | XXVI, 64. — | II, | 8 |
| | XXVIII, 19. — | IV, | 72 |

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------|-----|
| <i>Mark</i> | II, 15. — | III, | 168 |
| | IV, 12. — | VIII, | 97 |
| | IV, 19. — | VIII, | 200 |
| | VI, 5. — | IV, | 379 |
| | — | IX, | 58 |
| | VI, 11. — | X, | 352 |
| | VII, 7. — | II, | 64 |
| | VIII, 17. — | IV, | 389 |
| | X, 30. — | II, | 401 |
| | XI, 24. — | IX, | 452 |
| | XIII, 7. — | VI, | 436 |

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------|-----|
| <i>Luke</i> | I, 30. — | VI, | 193 |
| | I, 75. — | II, | 115 |
| | II, 52. — | X, | 176 |
| | III, 38. — | II, | 53 |
| | VI, 24. — | III, | 273 |
| | VI, 40. — | IX, | 103 |
| | VII, 33, 34. — | IV, | 290 |
| | VIII, 10. — | X, | 71 |
| | VIII, 15. — | X, | 90 |
| | IX, 61. — | II, | 391 |
| | X, 19. — | VIII, | 309 |
| | X, 20. — | II, | 185 |
| | — | IV, | 46 |
| | XI, 5. — | IX, | 450 |
| | XI, 16. — | III, | 104 |
| | XI, 34. — | III, | 105 |
| | XI, 46. — | VIII, | 6 |
| | XI, 47. — | X, | 223 |

XII,

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

Chap. Ver.

Vol. Page.

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| XII, 35. ——— | IX, 399 |
| XII, 57. ——— | V, 149 |
| XIII, 15. ——— | X, 235 |
| XIII, 24. ——— | IV, 290 |
| ————— | X, 239 |
| XIII, 29. ——— | VIII, 309 |
| XIII, 32. ——— | IX, 103 |
| XIII, 33. ——— | VI, 437 |
| ————— | IX, 337 |
| XIV, 16. ——— | VII, 2 |
| XIV, 21. ——— | VII, 2 |
| XIV, 23. ——— | VII, 3 |
| XIV, 26. ——— | II, 397 |
| XV, 7. ——— | IX, 137 |
| XVI, 9. ——— | III, 284 |
| ————— | VII, 258 |
| XVI, 11. ——— | VII, 258 |
| XVI, 19. ——— | VIII, 134 |
| XVI, 23. ——— | V, 331 |
| XVII, 2. ——— | VI, 423 |
| XVII, 35. ——— | IX, 399 |
| XVIII, 1. ——— | XI, 450 |
| XXI, 19. ——— | IX, 141 |
| XXIII, 17. ——— | VII, 8 |
| XXIII, 31. ——— | VII, 296 |
| XXIV, 29. ——— | VII, 5 |

John

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| I, 1. ——— | VI, 114 |
| I, 14. ——— | II, 11 |
| ————— | V, 54 |
| I, 16. ——— | V, 404 |
| I, 17. ——— | I, 133 |
| ————— | II, 272 |
| II, 22. ——— | VIII, 174 |
| III, 5. &c. ——— | II, 190 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol. Page.</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| III, 6. ——— | IX, 319 |
| III, 8. ——— | VI, 67 |
| III, 13. ——— | V, 9 |
| III, 16. ——— | IV, 163 |
| ————— | V, 50 |
| IV, 9. ——— | VII, 187 |
| IV, 13. ——— | VII, 188 |
| IV, 23. ——— | III, 265 |
| ————— | IV, 208 |
| IV, 35. ——— | I, 94 |
| IV, 36. ——— | I, 95 |
| V, 17. ——— | X, 65 |
| V, 43. ——— | V, 94 |
| VI, 35. ——— | III, 66 |
| VI, 44. ——— | IX, 37 |
| ————— | I, 9 |
| ————— | III, 35 |
| VI, 54. ——— | IV, 34 |
| VI, 63. ——— | III, 264 |
| VI, 64. ——— | III, 79 |
| VI, 70. ——— | VIII, 395 |
| VII, 39. ——— | VI, 48, 72 |
| VIII, 12. ——— | III, 1 |
| VIII, 18. ——— | VIII, 2 |
| VIII, 28. ——— | III, 2 |
| VIII, 31, 32, &c. ——— | III, 3 |
| VIII, 43. ——— | III, 42 |
| VIII, 44. ——— | X, 158 |
| ————— | VIII, 18 |
| IX, 41. ——— | I, 398 |
| X, 18. ——— | V, 313 |
| X, 27. ——— | IX, 37 |
| ————— | IV, 352 |
| X, 34. ——— | V, 52 |
| XI, 4. ——— | II, 9 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

Chap. Ver. Vol. Page.

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| XI, 4. ——— | III, 171 |
| XI, 26. ——— | V, 206 |
| XI, 40. ——— | II, 9 |
| XII, 32. ——— | III, 70 |
| XII, 37, 39, 40. ——— | IV, 392 |
| XII, 40. ——— | VIII, 105 |
| XII, 44. ——— | I, 129 |
| XIII, 11. ——— | III, 76 |
| XIII, 34. ——— | III, 297 |
| XV, 1. ——— | III, 131 |
| XV, 21. ——— | VII, 21 |
| XV, 22. ——— | I, 398 |
| XV, 24. ——— | VIII, 190 |
| XVI, 3. ——— | IV, 414 |
| ————— | III, 80 |
| XVI, 7. ——— | VIII, 315 |
| XVI, 28. ——— | V, 9 |
| XVII, 9. ——— | X, 10 |
| ————— | I, 129 |
| XVII, 12. ——— | III, 75 |
| XX, 17, 18. ——— | V, 305 |
| XX, 21. ——— | IV, 4 |
| ————— | VI, 94 |
| XX, 28. ——— | VI, 22 |
| XX, 29. ——— | VII, 222 |
| ————— | V, 151 |
| XXI, 18. ——— | VII, 52 |

Acts

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| I, 2. ——— | VI, 81 |
| II, 3. ——— | VI, 57 |
| II, 26. ——— | V, 324 |
| II, 27. ——— | V, 333 |
| II, 29. ——— | V, 300 |
| II, 44. ——— | X, 174 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scrip'ure.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| II, | 46. | IV, | 141 |
| | | X, | 174 |
| II, | 47. | III, | 35 |
| | | X, | 80 |
| III, | 19. | I, | 126 |
| IV, | 7. | V, | 94 |
| IV, | 12. | II, | 203 |
| IV, | 32, 33. | X, | 176 |
| V, | 1. | X, | 177 |
| V, | 3. | IV, | 382 |
| V, | 4. | I, | 129 |
| V, | 9. | X, | 189 |
| V, | 19. | VI, | 77 |
| V, | 32. | III, | 51 |
| VI, | 3. | III, | 201 |
| VI, | 7. | I, | 6 |
| VII, | 47. | I, | 189 |
| VII, | 51. | IV, | 376 |
| X, | 4. | V, | 148 |
| X, | 36, 43. | V, | 43 |
| X, | 40. | V, | 311 |
| XII, | 23. | II, | 14 |
| | | III, | 244 |
| XIII, | 39. | V, | 61 |
| | | IV, | 36 |
| XIII, | 46. | X, | 11 |
| XIII, | 48. | II, | 18 |
| | | III, | 35 |
| | | IV, | 364 |
| | | IX, | 36 |
| XIV, | 3. | II, | 272 |
| XIV, | 21. | VI, | 95 |
| XV, | 9. | IV, | 37 |
| XV, | 17. | IV, | 84 |
| XVI, | 15. | VII, | 5 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| | XVII, 16. ——— | VII, | 329 |
| | XVII, 24. ——— | I, | 189 |
| | ————— | VII, | 331 |
| | XVII, 29. ——— | I, | 113 |
| | ————— | II, | 53 |
| | ————— | IX, | 17 |
| | XIX, 2. ——— | V, | 390 |
| | ————— | VI, | 33 |
| | XIX, 4. ——— | VI, | 34 |
| | XIX, 5. ——— | VI, | 49 |
| | XX, 22. ——— | III, | 265 |
| | XX, 24. ——— | II, | 222 |
| <i>Rom.</i> | I, 1, 3, 5. ——— | II, | 222 |
| | I, 5. ——— | I, | 136 |
| | ————— | II, | 266 |
| | I, 17. ——— | V, | 409 |
| | I, 20. ——— | IX, | 20 |
| | I, 24. ——— | III, | 54 |
| | I, 28. ——— | III, | 40 |
| | I, 32. ——— | X, | 354 |
| | II, 2. ——— | X, | 354 |
| | II, 8, 9. ——— | X, | 351 |
| | II, 16. ——— | VIII, | 391 |
| | II, 24. ——— | V, | 92 |
| | ————— | IX., | 170 |
| | II, 28. ——— | III, | 265 |
| | ————— | X, | 256 |
| | II, 29. ——— | I, | 138 |
| | III, 4. ——— | I, | 379 |
| | III, 7. ——— | VIII, | 426 |
| | III, 16. ——— | II, | 85 |
| | III, 19. ——— | VII, | 46 |
| | III, 23. ——— | V, | 168 |
| | ————— | IX, | 330 |
| | III, 24. ——— | II, | 272 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| III, | 25. ——— | IV, | 136 |
| | ————— | VIII, | 403 |
| III, | 28. ——— | I, | 6 |
| III, | 28, 31. ——— | X, | 109 |
| IV, | 12. ——— | X, | 249 |
| IV, | 13. ——— | II, | 250 |
| IV, | 25. ——— | V, | 317 |
| IV, | 28. ——— | X, | 249 |
| V, | 7. ——— | I, | 326 |
| V, | 8. ——— | II, | 223 |
| | ————— | IV, | 183 |
| V, | 12. ——— | V, | 157 |
| V, | 20. ——— | V, | 169 |
| VI, | 1. ——— | II, | 272 |
| VI, | 2. ——— | IV, | 69 |
| VI, | 3. ——— | IV, | 57 |
| | ————— | IX, | 402 |
| VI, | 4. ——— | V, | 318 |
| VI, | 5. ——— | IV, | 218 |
| VI, | 6. ——— | VIII, | 416 |
| VI, | 14. ——— | X, | 113 |
| VI, | 15. ——— | II, | 274 |
| VI, | 17. ——— | X, | 12 |
| | ————— | X, | 224 |
| VII, | 4. ——— | VIII, | 11, 184 |
| | ————— | X, | 116 |
| VII, | 6. ——— | I, | 138 |
| VII, | 7, 8. ——— | V, | 160 |
| VII, | 10. ——— | V, | 168 |
| VII, | 12. ——— | V, | 167 |
| VII, | 24. ——— | VIII, | 185 |
| VIII, | 1. ——— | VIII, | 185 |
| | ————— | VIII, | 422 |
| VIII, | 1, 6, 8. ——— | II, | 88 |
| VIII, | 2. ——— | V, | 399 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol. Page.</i> |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| VIII, 3. ——— | I, 304 |
| ————— | V, 53 |
| ————— | VIII, 369 |
| VIII, 3, 4. ——— | X, 114 |
| VIII, 5. ——— | V, 375 |
| VIII, 7. ——— | V, 388 |
| VIII, 9. ——— | IV, 219 |
| ————— | VIII, 186 |
| VIII, 10. ——— | IV, 69 |
| VIII, 11. ——— | VIII, 37 |
| VIII, 14. ——— | IV, 219 |
| ————— | IX, 322 |
| VIII, 15. ——— | II, 53 |
| ————— | III, 23 |
| ————— | V, 60, 398 |
| VIII, 23. ——— | VI, 95 |
| VIII, 29. ——— | II, 177 |
| ————— | V, 406 |
| IX, 4, 5. ——— | X, 102 |
| IX, 10, 11. ——— | VI, 256 |
| IX, 15. ——— | IV, 388 |
| ————— | IX, 59 |
| IX, 15, 21, 22. ——— | VI, 258 |
| IX, 17. ——— | IV, 387 |
| ————— | VII, 312 |
| IX, 22. ——— | I, 233 |
| IX, 27. ——— | IV, 389 |
| IX, 31. ——— | IV, 393 |
| X, 2. ——— | IV, 413 |
| X, 6. ——— | V, 179 |
| ————— | X, 121 |
| X, 8. ——— | I, 6 |
| XI, 5. ——— | I, 136 |
| XI, 5, 6. ——— | X, 112 |
| XI, 7, 10. ——— | IV, 391 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| XI, | 21. ——— | VII, | 285 |
| XI, | 26. ——— | IV, | 290 |
| XI, | 28, 29. ——— | I, | 155 |
| XI, | 29. ——— | V, | 105 |
| XI, | 36. ——— | II, | 333 |
| XII, | 3. ——— | II, | 267 |
| | ————— | III, | 254 |
| | ————— | VII, | 219 |
| XII, | 3, 6. ——— | VI, | 60 |
| XII, | 6. ——— | I, | 6 |
| | ————— | II, | 267 |
| XII, | 19. ——— | X, | 40 |
| XIII, | 12. ——— | VII, | 127 |
| XIII, | 13. ——— | VIII, | 270 |
| XIII, | 14. ——— | IV, | 219 |
| | ————— | VII, | 39 |
| XIV, | 3. ——— | III, | 288 |
| XIV, | 7. ——— | II, | 261 |
| XIV, | 22. ——— | II, | 36 |
| XVI, | 17. ——— | IV, | 266 |
| | ————— | VI, | 431 |
| I Cor. | I, 9. ——— | IV, | 215 |
| | I, 10. ——— | IV, | 102 |
| | I, 12. ——— | VIII, | 429 |
| | I, 17. ——— | I, | 129 |
| | ————— | X, | 12 |
| | I, 18. ——— | IX, | 26 |
| | I, 25. ——— | I, | 320 |
| | I, 26. ——— | III, | 47 |
| | II, 4. ——— | I, | 213 |
| | II, 6. ——— | IX, | 70 |
| | II, 14. ——— | III, | 40 |
| | ————— | IV, | 350 |
| | III, 2. ——— | II, | 68 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| III, | 3. | IV, | 100 |
| | | IV, | 417 |
| III, | 5, 6. | IX, | 24 |
| III, | 8. | IX, | 197 |
| III, | 12, 15. | II, | 68 |
| III, | 13. | I, | 395 |
| III, | 15. | I, | 396 |
| | | IX, | 420 |
| III, | 16. | VIII, | 56 |
| III, | 17. | VII, | 371 |
| | | IX, | 24 |
| III, | 18. | III, | 238 |
| | | IX, | 43 |
| IV, | 4. | I, | 258 |
| IV, | 6. | III, | 254 |
| IV, | 8. | IV, | 417 |
| IV, | 20. | VII, | 239 |
| V. | 3. | III, | 264 |
| VI, | 12. | I, | 130 |
| | | X, | 11 |
| VI, | 19. | VII, | 124 |
| | | X, | 186 |
| VII, | 7. | VI, | 61 |
| VII, | 19. | VIII, | 314 |
| VII, | 20. | IX, | 380 |
| VIII, | 6. | II, | 50 |
| VIII, | 9. | II, | 35 |
| VIII, | 10. | VI, | 433 |
| IX, | 21. | III, | 22 |
| X, | 7. | IX, | 238 |
| X, | 15. | III, | 160 |
| | | IV, | 361 |
| | | IV, | 156 |
| X, | 15, 16. | II, | 3 |
| X, | 22. | VIII, | 427 |
| | | C 6 | 2 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| Chap. | Ver. | Vol. | Page |
|--------|---------------------|-------|------|
| | X, 23, 24, &c. | II, | 5 |
| | X, 25, 26, 27, &c. | II, | 34 |
| | X, 29. ——— | VIII, | 427 |
| | XI, 7. ——— | II, | 8 |
| | XI, 19. ——— | III, | 161 |
| | ————— | VI, | 438 |
| | XI, 23. ——— | IV, | 181 |
| | XI, 27, &c. ——— | IV, | 188 |
| | XI, 29. ——— | IV, | 109 |
| | XII, 8. ——— | VII, | 57 |
| | XIII, 1. ——— | VII, | 386 |
| | XIII, 2. ——— | V, | 403 |
| | XIII, 3. ——— | I, | 141 |
| | ————— | III, | 283 |
| | ————— | VII, | 18 |
| | XIII, 12. ——— | V, | 149 |
| | ————— | VII, | 223 |
| | XV, 9. ——— | II, | 272 |
| | XV, 13, 14. ——— | V, | 222 |
| | XV, 17. ——— | V, | 317 |
| | XV, 22. ——— | V, | 215 |
| | XV, 24. ——— | VI, | 90 |
| | XV, 36. ——— | V, | 225 |
| | XV, 42, 43, 44. ——— | V, | 228 |
| | XV, 55 ——— | V, | 156 |
| | XV, 56. ——— | VIII, | 186 |
| 2 Cor. | I, 9. ——— | V, | 325 |
| | I, 20. ——— | X, | 345 |
| | I, 22. ——— | II, | 87 |
| | ————— | VI, | 408 |
| | III, 3. ——— | V, | 390 |
| | III, 5. ——— | III, | 254 |
| | III, 6, 7. ——— | V, | 391 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| III, | 14. ——— | V, | 393 |
| IV, | 6. ——— | V, | 401 |
| V, | 7. ——— | VII, | 222 |
| V, | 14. ——— | VII, | 8 |
| | ————— | III, | 71 |
| V, | 16. ——— | II, | 107 |
| V, | 17. ——— | IV, | 219 |
| V, | 20. ——— | IV, | 329 |
| V, | 21. ——— | V, | 203 |
| VII, | 1. ——— | II, | 184 |
| VIII, | 1, 6, 7. — | II, | 270 |
| VIII, | 14. ——— | VI, | 408 |
| VIII, | 21. ——— | II, | 32 |
| X, | 1. ——— | VII, | 117 |
| XII, | 7. ——— | III, | 224 |
| XII, | 11. ——— | VII, | 8 |
| XIII, | 5. ——— | VI, | 63 |
| <i>Galat.</i> | I, 6, 7. ——— | IV, | 97 |
| | II, 3. ——— | VII, | 7 |
| | II, 7. ——— | II, | 250 |
| | II, 14. ——— | VII, | 7 |
| | II, 15. ——— | I, | 135 |
| | ————— | X, | 111 |
| | III, 1. ——— | VII, | 70 |
| | III, 2. ——— | I, | 135 |
| | III, 2, 5. ——— | X, | 110 |
| | III, 3. ——— | I, | 137 |
| | ————— | VIII, | 33 |
| | III, 4. ——— | X, | 115 |
| | III, 7, 9. ——— | X, | 249 |
| | III, 8. ——— | I, | 153 |
| | III, 22. ——— | IX, | 330 |
| | III, 24. ——— | I, | 299 |
| | ————— | X, | 111 |
| | | C c 3 | |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol. Page.</i> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| III, 27. ————— | VI, 101 |
| III, 27, 28. ——— | IV, 89 |
| III, 28. ————— | II, 107 |
| IV, 1. ————— | X, 117 |
| IV, 3. ————— | III, 21 |
| ————— | V, 48 |
| IV, 8. ————— | I, 61 |
| IV, 13. ————— | V, 397 |
| IV, 21. ————— | X, 259 |
| IV, 29. ————— | IX, 320 |
| V, 2. ————— | VIII, 33 |
| V, 4. ————— | I, 136 |
| ————— | II, 274 |
| ————— | X, 113 |
| V, 6. ————— | X, 125 |
| V, 17. ————— | IX, 337 |
| V, 18. ————— | VIII, 33 |
| V, 20. ————— | VIII, 31 |
| V, 22. ————— | IV, 223 |
| VI, 1. ————— | III, 163 |
| VI, 12. ————— | VII, 7 |
| VI, 15. ————— | VII, 98 |
| <i>Ephes.</i> I, 2, 5. ——— | II, 55 |
| I, 7, 8. ————— | I, 307 |
| I, 10. ————— | IV, 228 |
| ————— | IX, 64 |
| II, 1, 2, 3. ——— | VIII, 343 |
| II, 3. ————— | IV, 67 |
| ————— | VIII, 428 |
| II, 5. ————— | II, 80 |
| II, 6. ————— | IV, 216 |
| II, 18. ————— | II, 55 |
| III, 8. ————— | III, 229 |
| III, 9. ————— | VI, 191 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

Chap. Ver. Vol. Page.

| | | | |
|------------|-------|-------|-----|
| III, 10. | _____ | IV, | 229 |
| III, 15. | _____ | IV, | 85 |
| IV, 3. | _____ | VI, | 77 |
| IV, 6. | _____ | II, | 50 |
| IV, 7. | _____ | III, | 215 |
| IV, 7, 11. | _____ | VI, | 60 |
| IV, 18. | _____ | II, | 200 |
| IV, 22. | _____ | IV, | 76 |
| IV, 24. | _____ | II, | 175 |
| IV, 29. | _____ | II, | 270 |
| V, 3. | _____ | VII, | 122 |
| V, 5. | _____ | VII, | 372 |
| | _____ | VIII, | 58 |
| V, 6. | _____ | VIII, | 40 |
| V, 14. | _____ | III, | 50 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---------|-------|-------|-----|
| <i>Phil.</i> | II, 5. | _____ | III, | 250 |
| | | _____ | V, | 28 |
| | II, 6. | _____ | V, | 10 |
| | II, 8. | _____ | V, | 26 |
| | II, 9. | _____ | V, | 41 |
| | | _____ | VI, | 89 |
| | II, 11. | _____ | II, | 13 |
| | II, 12. | _____ | III, | 69 |
| | II, 15. | _____ | III, | 165 |
| | III, 3. | _____ | I, | 138 |
| | | _____ | III, | 265 |
| | | _____ | VII, | 131 |
| | | _____ | VIII, | 177 |
| | IV, 5. | _____ | IV, | 417 |

| | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------|-----|-----|
| <i>Colos.</i> | I, 5. | _____ | V, | 376 |
| | I, 6. | _____ | II, | 273 |
| | I, 19, 20. | _____ | II, | 54 |
| | I, 21. | _____ | II, | 55 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| I, 24. ————— | IV, | 240 |
| II, 1, 2. ———— | I, | 275 |
| II, 2. ————— | VIII, | 416 |
| II, 5. ————— | III, | 264 |
| II, 9. ————— | VI, | 87 |
| II, 12. ————— | V, | 318 |
| II, 13. ————— | V, | 317 |
| II, 16. ————— | X, | 57 |
| II, 17. ———— | VIII, | 11 |
| ————— | VIII, | 416 |
| II, 18. ———— | IV, | 233 |
| ————— | IX, | 445 |
| II, 22. ———— | VIII, | 32 |
| II, 24. ———— | I, | 274 |
| III, 1. ————— | V, | 318 |
| III, 2. ————— | II, | 107 |
| III, 10. ———— | II, | 175 |
| III, 11. ———— | VIII, | 314 |
| ————— | X, | 256 |
| III, 12. ———— | VII, | 18 |
| ————— | VII, | 39 |
| III, 14. ———— | III, | 215 |
| III, 17. ———— | II, | 17 |
| ————— | VIII, | 67 |
| IV, 6. ————— | VIII, | 67 |
| <i>1 Thes.</i> IV, 5. ———— | IX, | 10 |
| IV, 8. ————— | VII, | 124 |
| IV, 12. ———— | II, | 33 |
| IV, 15. ———— | VIII, | 428 |
| V, 22. ———— | II, | 33 |
| <i>2 Thes.</i> I, 8. ———— | IX, | 10 |
| ————— | X, | 277 |
| I, 12. ———— | V, | 91 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| II, | 4. ———— | II, | 66 |
| | ———— | VI, | 353 |
| II, | 9. ———— | VI, | 178 |
| II, | 10. ———— | IX, | 153 |
| II, | 11. ———— | IV, | 407 |
| II, | 13. ———— | VII, | 385 |
| II, | 15. ———— | II, | 273 |
| <i>1 Tim.</i> | I, 4, 5. ———— | III, | 301 |
| | II, 4. ———— | X, | 11 |
| | II, 6. ———— | VIII, | 370 |
| | II, 14. ———— | I, | 130 |
| | III, 6. ———— | VIII, | 17 |
| | III, 7. ———— | III, | 165 |
| | ———— | VI, | 445 |
| | III, 16. ———— | VI, | 191 |
| | V, 24, 25 ———— | IX, | 415 |
| | V, 25. ———— | I, | 254 |
| | VI, 16. ———— | I, | 146 |
| <i>2 Tim.</i> | I, 9. ———— | IX, | 65 |
| | II, 1. ———— | II, | 273 |
| | II, 5. ———— | X, | 283 |
| | II, 13. ———— | VIII, | 120 |
| | II, 15. ———— | IX, | 412 |
| | II, 19. ———— | II, | 87 |
| | ———— | IV, | 90 |
| | II, 20. ———— | VI, | 254 |
| | ———— | X, | 92 |
| | II, 23. ———— | IV, | 90 |
| | ———— | VIII, | 171 |
| | II, 25. ———— | III, | 164 |
| | III, 2. ———— | X, | 228 |
| | III, 4. ———— | VIII, | 154 |
| | III, 12. ———— | VII, | 289 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|--------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | III, 13. ——— | IV, | 39 ⁱ |
| | IV, 3. ——— | II, | 63 |
| <i>Titus</i> | I, 3. ——— | IX, | 55 |
| | II, 10. ——— | II, | 17 |
| | III, 10. ——— | X, | 230 |
| <i>Heb.</i> | I, 1. ——— | V, | 50 |
| | I, 5, 6. ——— | V, | 54 |
| | II, 16. ——— | V, | 54 |
| | II, 17. ——— | V, | 58 |
| | III, 12. ——— | IV, | 50 |
| | III, 12, 19. ——— | IX, | 10 |
| | III, 18. ——— | IV, | 49 |
| | IV, 3. ——— | X, | 60 |
| | IV, 6. ——— | IV, | 49 |
| | IV, 9. ——— | X, | 61 |
| | IV, 12. ——— | VI, | 115 |
| | IV, 15. ——— | V, | 27 |
| | VI, 3. ——— | IX, | 73 |
| | VI, 6. ——— | VIII, | 355 |
| | VI, 10. ——— | I, | 383 |
| | VI, 11. ——— | IX, | 68 |
| | VI, 13. ——— | I, | 154 |
| | VII, 16. ——— | I, | 138 |
| | VII, 25. ——— | III, | 66 |
| | VIII, 1. ——— | V, | 88 |
| | IX, 10. ——— | I, | 138 |
| | IX, 14. ——— | VIII, | 405 |
| | IX, 26. ——— | VIII, | 124 |
| | IX, 27. ——— | VIII, | 377 |
| | IX, 28. ——— | VIII, | 370 |
| | X, 19. ——— | V, | 359 |
| | X, 22. ——— | V, | 44 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| X, | 26. ————— | IX, | 247 |
| X, | 29. ————— | VIII, | 355 |
| XI, | 1. ————— | I, | 2 |
| XI, | 1. ————— | VII, | 225 |
| XI, | 6. ————— | I, | 8 |
| XI, | 9. ————— | V, | 378 |
| XI, | 12. ————— | I, | 244 |
| XI, | 16. ————— | V, | 287 |
| XI, | 19. ————— | II, | 247 |
| | ————— | IV, | 40 |
| | ————— | IV, | 362 |
| | ————— | VII, | 231 |
| XII, | 1. ————— | VIII, | 416 |
| XII, | 2. ————— | V, | 350 |
| XII, | 11. ————— | VIII, | 328 |
| XII, | 16. ————— | VII, | 127 |
| XII, | 23. ————— | IX, | 118 |
| XIII, | 8. ————— | I, | 152 |
| <i>James</i> | I, 13. ————— | I, | 230 |
| | ————— | VI, | 207 |
| | I, 15. ————— | VIII, | 191 |
| | I, 17. ————— | I, | 149 |
| | I, 25. ————— | V, | 398 |
| | I, 27. ————— | VIII, | 54 |
| | II, 10. ————— | VIII, | 355 |
| | II, 11. ————— | VIII, | 40 |
| | II, 13. ————— | II, | 10 |
| | II, 23. ————— | II, | 106 |
| | III, 1. ————— | II, | 70 |
| | III, 6. ————— | V, | 330 |
| | IV, 1. ————— | IV, | 418 |
| | ————— | VI, | 431 |
| | IV, 4. ————— | II, | 112 |

1 Pet.

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 <i>Pet.</i> | I, 7. | VII, | 290 |
| | I, 10. | II, | 274 |
| | I, 21, 22. | IV, | 37 |
| | II, 8. | IV, | 391 |
| | | VII, | 311 |
| | II, 11. | VIII, | 56 |
| | II, 16. | V, | 397 |
| | III, 4. | I, | 364 |
| | | X, | 139 |
| | III, 10. | X, | 166 |
| | III, 20. | II, | 311 |
| | | IV, | 288 |
| | IV, 1. | III, | 35 |
| | IV, 8. | III, | 300 |
| | | VI, | 417 |
| | IV, 12. | VIII, | 126 |
| | V, 9. | VIII, | 236 |
| 2 <i>Pet.</i> | I, 4. | II, | 175 |
| | | IX, | 319 |
| | I, 17. | II, | 7 |
| | I, 19. | VIII, | 159 |
| | I, 20. | V, | 16 |
| | II, 14. | IX, | 336 |
| | III, 3. | VIII, | 82 |
| | III, 9. | IV, | 342 |
| | III, 16. | VIII, | 170 |
| | III, 18. | II, | 270 |
| 1 <i>Job.</i> | I, 3. | IV, | 214 |
| | I, 6. | V, | 363 |
| | I, 8. | IX, | 331 |
| | II, 2. | VIII, | 270 |
| | | IV, | 382 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| II, | 3. | VIII, | 310 |
| II, | 10. | III, | 299 |
| II, | 15. | II, | 112 |
| II, | 16. | IX, | 348 |
| III, | 2. | II, | 176 |
| | | V, | 408 |
| III, | 3. | IV, | 214 |
| III, | 8. | IV, | 61 |
| | | VIII, | 15 |
| III, | 9. | VIII, | 20 |
| | | V, | 64 |
| | | X, | 88 |
| | | VIII, | 27 |
| | | VIII, | 181 |
| III, | 15. | X, | 215 |
| IV, | 1. | VI, | 159 |
| IV, | 8. | IX, | 10 |
| IV, | 20. | III, | 299 |
| IV, | 20, 21. | II, | 100 |
| V, | 1, 5. | VI, | 160 |
| V, | 4. | VIII, | 187 |
| | | X, | 85 |
| V, | 9. | VI, | 166 |
| V, | 16. | III, | 171 |
| V, | 18. | IX, | 340 |
| V, | 19. | II, | 307 |
| | | VIII, | 16 |
| V, | 20. | VI, | 167 |
| 2 Job. | 9. | III, | 80 |
| Jude, | 4. | IV, | 391 |
| | 5. | IX, | 238 |
| | 7. | I, | 76 |
| | 9. | VIII, | 10 |

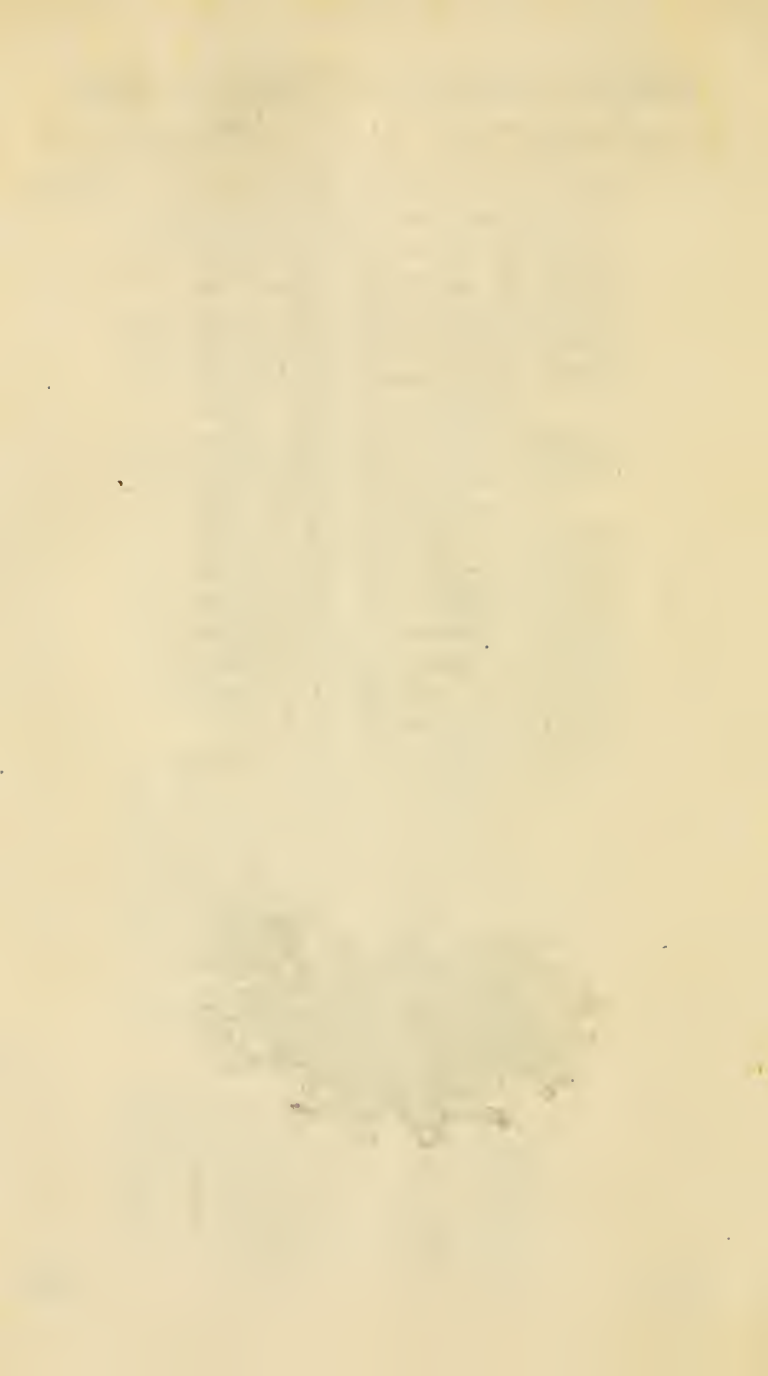
An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap. Ver.</i> | <i>Vol. Page.</i> |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Rev.</i> I, 4. ————— | I, 145 |
| I, 11. ————— | I, 71 |
| I, 18. ————— | VI, 86 |
| ————— | X, 345 |
| II, 7. ————— | VIII, 302 |
| II, 9. ————— | III, 267 |
| II, 13. ————— | III, 378 |
| ————— | VIII, 15 |
| II, 14. ————— | VI, 428 |
| III, 14. ————— | VI, 116 |
| ————— | X, 345 |
| III, 15. ————— | I, 168 |
| ————— | IV, 301 |
| III, 17. ————— | III, 227 |
| VI, 16. ————— | VIII, 382 |
| VII, 3. ————— | VI, 77 |
| VII, 14. ————— | IV, 309 |
| ————— | VIII, 333 |
| VII, 15. ————— | VIII, 298 |
| X, 6. ————— | VIII, 79 |
| XI, 13. ————— | II, 14 |
| XII, 7. ————— | I, 227 |
| XII, 9, 10. ——— | II, 339 |
| XII, 10. ————— | I, 227 |
| XIII, 6. ————— | IV, 235 |
| ————— | V, 381 |
| XIII, 8. ————— | II, 67 |
| ————— | IV, 278 |
| ————— | VIII, 310 |
| XIII, 15. ————— | VII, 21 |
| XIV, 3. ————— | IV, 352 |
| XIV, 6. ————— | I, 153 |
| XIV, 10. ————— | I, 341 |
| XV, 2. ————— | III, 86 |
| ————— | IV, 357 |

An Index of the several Texts of Scripture.

| <i>Chap.</i> | <i>Ver.</i> | <i>Vol.</i> | <i>Page.</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| XVI, | 5. ——— | X, | 357 |
| XVI, | 9, 11. ——— | VI, | 283 |
| XVII, | 2. ——— | VI, | 345 |
| XVII, | 5. ——— | III, | 264 |
| XVII, | 6. ——— | VI, | 172 |
| XVII, | 15. ——— | VI, | 354 |
| XVII, | 17. ——— | VII, | 312 |
| | ————— | IV, | 391 |
| XVIII, | 3. ——— | IV, | 261 |
| XVIII, | 23, 24. ——— | VI, | 345 |
| | ————— | VII, | 387 |
| XIX, | 1. ——— | X, | 357 |
| XIX, | 10. ——— | VI, | 171 |
| XX, | 13, 14. — | V, | 332 |
| XXI, | 6. ——— | IV, | 344 |
| XXII, | 4. ——— | IV, | 86 |
| XXII, | 11. ——— | IV, | 327 |
| XXII, | 13. ——— | I, | 71 |
| XXII, | 17. ——— | IV, | 343 |





An INDEX of the principal Matters
contained in the foregoing ten Vo-
lumes of Sermons.

A.

A BRAHAM, *who*
meant by the Pos-
terity of Abra-
ham, Vol. X. p. 121

Abraham, *his Faith, what*
it consisted in, Vol. II.
p. 245

—————, *how*
manifested, Vol. II. p. 247

—————, *his Offering his*
Son not inconsistent with
Morality, Vol. II. p. 258.
Vol. VII. p. 210

Abilities. *See Powers.*

Abolution, *The ill Effect*
of it, Vol. 9. p. 161

Abstinence, *The true Na-*
ture of it, Vol. X. p. 339.

Accidents, *Causes of great*
Events in the Hands
of Providence, Vol. VI.
p. 300.

Actions, *the Difference be-*
tweixt religious and moral
Actions, Vol. VIII. p. 92

Actions of Men, *all known*
to God, Vol. I. p. 252

————— *the Nature*
of them, Vol. III. p. 107

————— *what Pow-*
er Men have over them,
Vol. III. p. 111

————— *how to*
judge of them, Vol. III.
p. 128

Adam, *the weak Excuses of*
Adam and Eve, Vol.
VIII. p. 228

Additions to Religion,
what are such, Vol. IV.
p. 96

Admonition *necessary to be*
given to Sinners, Vol.
VIII. p. 61

Adoption, *what meant by*
that Word, Vol. IX.
p. 323

An Index of the principal Matters

- Advocate, *Christ our Ad-*
vocate, Vol. V. p. 355
- Afflictions, *many times the*
Consequences of Sin, Vol.
 VI. p. 266
- *sometimes pub-*
lick Judgments, Vol. VI.
 p. 269
- *sometimes to*
teach men Humility,
 Vol. VI. p. 276
- *sometimes to lead*
them to Repentance, Vol.
 VI. p. 279
- *sometimes to*
wean them from the World,
 Vol. VI. p. 288
- *sometimes to*
perfect their Virtues, Vol.
 VI. p. 290
- *the best Men*
often undergo the greatest
of them, Vol. VII. p. 281
- Ahab, *the Weakness of his*
Excuse, Vol. VIII. p. 231.
- Allegory, *what meant by*
it, Vol. X. p. 257
- Alms, *the Virtue of Cha-*
rity does not consist in
giving them, Vol. III.
 p. 282
- Ambition, *the Nature of*
it, Vol. III. p. 359
- Amen, *what meant by say-*
ing Amen, Vol. X. p.
 344
- Ananias, *the Crime he was*
guilty of, Vol. X. p. 180.
- *the Aggravations*
of it, Vol. X. p. 182
- Angels, *a description of*
them, Vol. IV. p. 227
- *the Worship of*
them impious, Vol. IV.
 p. 231. Vol. IX. p. 443
- Angels, *the Sin of the sal-*
len Angels did not consist
in rebelling against God by
Force, Vol. VIII. p. 10
- Antiquity, *a popish Mark*
of the true Church, Vol.
 IV. p. 262
- Apostacy, *characterized by*
Persecution, Vol. VII.
 p. 21
- Apostles, *and their Succes-*
sors, had no discretionary
Power of forgiving Sins,
 Vol. VIII. p. 391
- *the Acts of the*
Apostles, what they con-
tain, Vol. X. p. 100
- *Epistles of the*
Apostles, what they con-
tain, Vol. X. p. 101
- Arbitrary Power, *what*,
 Vol. I. p. 202. *How in*
God, *ibid.*
- Arianism, *what it consists*
in, Vol. VI. p. 99
- Assistance, *proportional to*
what is required of us,
 Vol. VII. p. 101
- Assistance

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

Assistance divine, promised
to the Disciples, Vol. VI.
p. 102

Astrology, the Sinfulness of
it, Vol. VI. p. 153

Atheists, the Folly of them,
Vol. I. p. 317

——— make a Mock of
Sin, Vol. III. p. 378

Atonement. See Expiation.

Authority of God ought to
be vindicated, Vol. VIII.
p. 356

Authority of Christ the
Extent of it, Vol. VI.
p. 83

——— the Original of
it, Vol. VI. p. 87

Authority, of Councils in
Matters of Faith, Vol.
II. p. 215

Authority, of the Church
of Christ, what it con-
sists in, Vol. IV. p. 265

Authority and Eminence
the Promises of the Gos-
pel not annexed to them,
Vol. VIII. p. 310

B

Balaam, the Weakness of
his Excuse, Vol. VIII.
p. 230

Baptism, what signified by
it, Vol. IV. p. 6, 73

——— the Nature of it,

Vol. IV. p. 31

——— the Design of it,

Vol. IV. p. 71

——— the Scripture Noti-
on of it, Vol. IX. p. 401

Baptism of Infants, what
the Obligation of it, Vol.
III. p. 98

Baptism, the Means by
which Repentance is ap-
plied to Sinner, Vol. III.
p. 182

Baptism, the Necessity of
it, Vol. VI. p. 38, &c.

Baptism, the Difference be-
tween John's Baptism and
Christ's Baptism, Vol.
VI. p. 52

Baptized, into the Name
of any Person, what,
Vol. IV. p. 81

Beasts, the Sacrifices of them
of no Efficacy to expiate
Sin, Vol. VIII. p. 375

Belief in God, the Founda-
tion of all Religion, Vol.
II. p. 238

——— what meant
by it, Vol. II. 252. Vol.
III. p. 102. Vol. IV.
p. 6

Belief, the Nature and Ex-
tent of Christian Belief,
Vol. IV. p. 21

——— Salvation, the Re-
ward of it, Vol. IV.

p. 39

D d 2

Belief,

An Index of the principal Matters

- Belief, *the Subject-matter of it, when necessary to Salvation*, Vol. IV. p. 10
 ——— *a commendable Virtue*, Vol. VII. p. 227
- Belief in Christ, *necessary to eternal Salvation*, Vol. II. p. 204. Vol. VI. p. 158
- Believed, *many things reasonable to be believed, though not the Objects of Sense or capable of Demonstration*, Vol. VII. p. 224
- Believers, *who are truly such*, Vol. IX. p. 11, 36
- Believing, *the Revelations of God*, Vol. II. p. 255.
- Birthright, *all Sinners sell their Birthright*, Vol. VIII. p. 45
- Blasphemy, *against the Holy Ghost, what*, Vol. VI. p. 19
- Blessed, *the emphatical Sense of the Word*, Vol. VIII. p. 298
- Blood, *the Testimony of it to our Saviour*, Vol. VI. p. 170
- Blood of Christ, *what meant by it*, Vol. VIII. p. 325
- Body, *the Resurrection of it. See Resurrection*
- Body of Death, *what meant by that Phrase*, Vol. VIII. p. 413
- Born, *to be born of God, what meant by it*, Vol. VI. p. 158. Vol. IX. p. 315
 ——— *how such Persons are said not to commit Sin*, Vol. IX. p. 327
- Business, *every man has a proper Business allotted him*, Vol. VII. p. 54
- ### C
- Calamities of Life *arise not from Chance or Necessity*, Vol. VI. p. 238. *See Afflictions.*
- Called. *See Elect.*
- Capacities, *that all Men are originally endued with Capacities sufficient for the Knowledge of God*, Vol. IX. p. 15
- Careless Persons *in religious Matters, how to be treated*, Vol. IX. p. 429
- Carelessness, *causes Men to oppose Truth*, Vol. III. p. 157
 ——— *Mens Carelessness in matters of Religion very incredible*, Vol. VII. p. 69
 ——— *the Deceitfulness of*

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

of it, Vol. VII. p. 373.
Catholick Church, what
meant by it, Vol. IV.
p. 229

———— wherein the Uni-
ty of it consists, Vol. IV.
p. 254, 257

Causes, Second Causes, what
owing to them, Vol. VI.
p. 307

———— generally misunder-
stood, Vol. X. p. 18

Censoriousness, the great
Evil of it, Vol. X. p.
160, 168

Ceremonies not intrinsical-
ly good, Vol. VII. p.
177

———— subordinate to
moral Duties, Vol. VII.
p. 178

Ceremonies, the Means and
not the End of Religion,
Vol. I. p. 124. Vol. VII.
p. 179

———— of the Law how
abused by the Jews, Vol.
I. p. 125

———— the consequence
of relying on them, Vol.
I. p. 117. Vol. III. p.
137

———— apt to make Men
Hypocrites, Vol. X. p.
232

———— not to be compa-
red with moral Duties,

Vol. III. p. 138. Vol.
IV. p. 104

———— of the Jews,
what appointed for, Vol.
IV. p. 118

———— small Stress laid
upon them in the Gospel,
Vol. VI. p. 36

———— whence proceeds
the Abuse of them, Vol.
VII. p. 168

———— must give place to mo-
ral Duties, Vol. X. p. 46

Chance, what meant by it,
Vol. VI. p. 302

Chance, the Miseries of
Life arise not from Chance,
Vol. VI. p. 238

Character of Men known
by their Actions only,
Vol. III. p. 132

Charity, what meant by it
in the New Testament,
Vol. I. p. 141. Vol. VI.
p. 47. Vol. VI. p. 404.
Vol. VII. p. 18

———— what the Virtue
so called, is, Vol. III.
p. 282

———— the End of Reli-
gion, Vol. III. p. 292

———— the Obligations
to practise it, Vol. VI.
p. 400

———— the Benefits ari-
sing from it, Vol. VI. p.
414.

An Index of the principal Matters

- sometimes put for
 the Whole of Religion,
 Vol. VII. p. 394
 Children of God, who
 meant, Vol. II. p. 74
 Children of the Devil, See
 Devil.
 Children, their Duty to
 their Parents, Vol. III.
 p. 333
 Christ, his miraculous Birth,
 no Proof of his Dignity to
 Unbelievers, Vol. V. p. 7.
 but a reasonable Circum-
 stance, *ibid.* p. 9
 Christ, the Dignity of his
 Person, Vol. V. p. 257
 — his Humiliation, what
 it consisted in, Vol. VIII.
 p. 323
 Christ, what meant by com-
 ing to him, Vol. III. p.
 65
 Christ, the Absurdity of
 some Mens Notion of lay-
 ing hold of him, Vol.
 VIII. p. 315
 Christ his Descent into Hell,
 Vol. V. p. 334
 Christ, his Death and Resur-
 rection, an argument to
 promote Newness of Life,
 Vol. IV. p. 64
 — his Character, Vol.
 IV. p. 214
 Christ, what meant by his
 being to suffer, Vol. VIII.
 p. 322.
 — his Sufferings the high-
 est Vindication of the Ho-
 nour of the Laws of God,
 Vol. VIII. p. 361
 Christ, stiled the Son of God
 in a peculiar manner,
 Vol. V. p. 53
 Christ, his coming foretold by
 the Prophets, Vol. V. p. 80
 Coming unto Christ, what
 meant by it, Vol. IV.
 p. 214
 Christians, who are truly
 such, Vol. VI. p. 160
 Christians, at first agreed
 to sell all they had, Vol.
 X. p. 177
 Christians, the wicked Lives
 of such, no Argument a-
 gainst the Truth and Ex-
 cellency of the Gospel,
 Vol. IX. p. 164
 Christians obliged to hold
 Communion with each o-
 ther, Vol. IV. p. 158
 Christian Religion, stiled
 Faith by St. Paul, Vol.
 X. p. 109
 — stiled Grace by
 the same Apostle, Vol. X.
 p. 112
 — stiled Spirit by
 the same Apostle, Vol. X.
 p. 114
 Church, popish, Marks of
 it, Vol. III. p. 32. Vol.
 IV.

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- IV. p. 205, 261. and
Vol. IX. p. 157
Church, *the true Mark of*
it, Vol. IX. p. 143,
153
——— *wherein the Unity*
of it consists, Vol. 4. p.
267
——— *universal, the State*
of it in the latter Ages of
the World, Vol. V. p.
99
——— *wherein the true*
Prosperity of it consists,
Vol. X. p. 235
Church of Christ, *who are*
the true Members of it,
Vol. IV. p. 233
Circumcision, *the Obliga-*
tion of it, Vol. III. p.
95
——— *the End of its*
Institution, Vol. IV. p.
118
Command, *the Extent of*
it with respect to Religion,
Vol. III. p. 94
Commandments, *what*
meant by doing the Com-
mandments of God, Vol.
VIII. p. 304
Communion. *See Sacra-*
ment
Communion of Christians
with each other, Vol. IV.
p. 158
Commutations *superstiti-*
ous, the Deceit of them,
Vol. VII. p. 387. Vol.
X. p. 279
Compulsion, *in Religious*
Matters, what Vol. VII.
p. 5. Ibid. p. 31
Conscience, *the Nature of*
it, Vol. III. p. 109
——— *the Judgment of*
it impartial, Vol. VIII.
p. 204
——— *the Nature of an*
erroneous Conscience, Vol.
VIII. p. 213
——— *a good Conscience*
the great Support under
Afflictions, Vol. X. p. 312
——— *a wounded Con-*
science the most insupport-
able Evil, Vol. X. p. 315
——— *of Sins past a*
great Cause of Uneasiness
to melancholy pious Per-
sons, Vol. X. p. 333
Consent, *universal Consent*
of the Being of God,
Vol. IX. p. 20
Consequences, *how far*
Men are answerable for
the Consequences of their
Actions, Vol. X. p. 214
Constancy, *the Perfection of*
a Christian, Vol. IX. p. 102
Contentedness, *taught by*
Religion, Vol. IX. p.
384
——— *its Obligation from*
the

An Index of the principal Matters

- the Law of Nature*, Vol. X. p. 2
- Contingencies, foreknown to God*, Vol. I. p. 259
- Contradictions, not the Object of infinite Power*, Vol. I. p. 216
- Conversation of Christians is in Heaven*, Vol. V. p. 366
- Covenants, Covenants of God immutable*, Vol. I. p. 153
- Corban, the meaning of it*, Vol. II. p. 113. and Vol. X. p. 282
- Corrupters of Religion how to be treated*, Vol. IX. p. 428
- Corruptions of the Church expressly foretold*, Vol. IX. p. 143
- Covet, the Meaning of that Law, thou shalt not covet*, Vol. VIII. p. 192
- Covetousness, what it consists in*, Vol. III. p. 357. Vol. VIII. p. 195
- Courage, the true Notion of it*, Vol. III. p. 371
- Creation, God created all things by Christ*, Vol. VI. p. 117
- *God created all things for his own pleasure without any external Motive*, Vol. VII. p. 302
- Credulity, different from Belief*, Vol. IV. p. 21
- Curiosity in the Affairs of others condemned by our Saviour*, Vol. VII. p. 61
- Curse, what meant by it*, Vol. X. p. 343
- Curse, repeating the Curse of the Law no uncharitable Wish*, Vol. X. p. 342
- Curſing, the Malignity of the Sin of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 80

D.

- D**avid, *the Weakness of his Excuse*, Vol. VIII. p. 230
- Days shortened by Wickedness*, Vol. II. p. 155
- Death, the Apprehension of it uneasy to every living Being*, Vol. VIII. p. 417
- Death, Sin the Cause of it*, Vol. V. p. 156
- *made terrible by Sin*, Vol. V. p. 158
- *the just Punishment of Sin*, Vol. X. p. 28
- Death temporal, what and how conquered*, Vol. V. p. 224
- Death eternal, what and how conquered*, Vol. V. p. 234
- Death

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- Death of Christ, *the strongest Motive to universal Obedience*, Vol. IV. p. 128
 ——— *the highest Instance of his Love of Men*, Vol. IV. p. 142...
 ——— *the great Expiation for Sin*, Vol. VIII. p. 322
 ——— *the Uses of it to us*, Vol. VIII. p. 406, &c.
 Death, *the second Death, what*, Vol. V. p. 234
 Debauchery, *the Malignity of the Sins of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 53
 Deceits, *the several Deceits of wicked Men*, Vol. VII. p. 364, and p. 373. Vol. IX. p. 251
 Deceitfulness of Sin, Vol. IX. p. 248
 Deceive, *what meant by deceiving*, Vol. X. p. 155
 Decrees of God, *unalterable*, Vol. I. p. 151
 ——— *ought not to be pried into*, Vol. VI. p. 153
 ——— *one great Cause of Trouble to melancholy pious Persons*, Vol. X. p. 326
 Defilement, *what meant by it in Scripture*, Vol. IV. p. 306
 Delusions in Religion, *what*, Vol. VIII. p. 103
 Denunciations, *solemn, the Design of them*, Vol. X. p. 360
 Deserts, *every Man shall finally be rewarded according to his Deserts*, Vol. IX. p. 196
 Destruction, *which Wickedness leads Men unto*, Vol. VIII. p. 95
 Destruction of whole Nations *the just Judgment of God*, Vol. X. p. 266
 Devil, *his Power against God*, Vol. I. p. 224, Vol. II. p. 335
 ——— *the Original of Disobedience*, Vol. VIII. p. 11
 Devil, *always ready to tempt Men to Sin*, Vol. VI. p. 205
 ——— *how every wicked Thing may be ascribed to him*, Vol. VI. p. 210
 Devil, *his Temptations*, Vol. I. p. 224
 ——— *how he entered into Judas*, Vol. III. p. 202
 ——— *his Temptations no Excuse to wicked Men*, Vol. VI. p. 200, and Vol. VIII. p. 235
 Devil, *how Men become his Children*, Vol. VIII. p. 3
 Devil,

An Index of the principal Matters

- Devil, *what Sins are peculiarly of him*, Vol. VIII. p. 17. Vol. X. p. 191
- Difference of Good and Evil, *manifest to all Men*, Vol. VII., p. 334. Vol. VIII. p. 203
- *confounded by wicked Men*, Vol. VII. p. 361
- Disciples of Christ, *the Character by which they are known*, Vol. IV. p. 164
- *his Commission to them*, Vol. VI. p. 93
- *the reason of Christ's making a Difference betwixt them and others in his Discourses*, Vol. X. p. 68
- Dishonour, *what it is to dishonour God*, Vol. II. p. 20.
- Distribution, *the unequal Distribution of Things owing to the Sovereignty of God*, Vol. VI. p. 252
- Dives, *his Character, and the Vices he was guilty of*, Vol. VII. p. 265
- Divinity of Christ, Vol. II. p. 216
- Divisions amongst Christians *whence they proceed*, Vol. VI. p. 430
- Doctrine, *the Doctrine Men are baptized into*, Vol. VI. p. 97.
- Doctrines, *fundamental, what*, Vol. IV. p. 15
- *plain to all Men*, Vol. IV. p. 12, and p. 406. Vol. IX. p. 68
- Doctrines, *how to distinguish false Doctrines*, Vol. VII. p. 159
- Doctrines of Religion, *reasonable to be believed, and sufficiently evidenced, &c.* Vol. V. p. 117, Vol. VII. p. 156
- *of Baptism and laying on of Hands, what meant by them*, Vol. IX. p. 85
- Doctrines, *corrupt Doctrines, what*, Vol. VI. p. 427
- *of the Romish Church, hypocritical*, Vol. X. p. 229
- Dominion not founded in Power, Vol. I. p. 238
- Dominion of Christ, *what it consists in*, Vol. V. p. 37
- Drop, *the Absurdity of those who affirm that one Drop of Christ's Blood was of sufficient Value to redeem the whole World*, Vol. VIII. p. 325

Duelling

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

Duelling, *the Unlawfulness of it*, Vol. X. p. 212
 Duty, *every man has a peculiar Duty allotted him*, Vol. VII, p. 54

E

Eating and Drinking unworthily, *what meant by it*, Vol. IV. p. 157

Elect, *who meant by such in the ixth Chap. of the Romans*, Vol. X. p. 329

End, *every thing created for its proper End*, Vol. VII. p. 315

Enthusiasm, *in whom*, Vol. II. p. 85, 97. Vol. VI. p. 177

Enthusiastick Persons, *the groundless Conceits of such Persons*, Vol. VIII. p. 310

Enthusiasts, *always flatter their Followers with worldly Success*, Vol. IX. p. 142

Equivalents for Sin, *the Danger of them*, Vol. II. p. 264

Errours in Religion, *a plain Rule to judge of them by*, Vol. IX. p. 174

Esau, *his selling his Birth-right explained*, Vol. VIII. p. 48

Effence of God, *immutable*, Vol. I. 144

Eternal, *immortal, everlasting, in what Sense used in Scripture*, Vol. I. p. 73

— *that God must necessarily be eternal*, Vol. I. p. 80

Eternity of God, *the true Notion of it*, Vol. I. p. 73

— *that Attribute by which the true God is principally distinguished from false Gods*, Vol. I. p. 83

— *an Argument of divine Providence*, Vol. I. p. 84. *Inferences from it*, p. 85, &c.

— *what meant by it when applied to God*, Vol. III. p. 340

Eucharist, *whence so called*, Vol. IV. p. 141

Events, *future, known unto God*, Vol. I. p. 259

— *not always answerable to second Causes*, Vol. VI. p. 299

Everlasting. *See Eternal.*

Evidence. *See Testimony.*

Evil, *whence it arises*, Vol. I. p. 259, 338

Evil, *why permitted*, Vol. I. p. 337

Evil,

An Index of the principal Matters

- Evil, *not chargeable upon God*, Vol. VI. p. 442
- Excuse, *the Weakness of Eve's Excuse*, Vol. VIII. p. 228
- Excuses, *the weak ones made by Sinners*, Vol. VIII. p. 218, 228
- Expiation, *the Sufferings and Death of Christ the great Expiation for Sin*, Vol. VIII. p. 322
- External Rites, *of the Law how abused by the Jews*, Vol. I. p. 125
- *always to yield to moral Duties*, Vol. X. p. 209
- Eye, *Lust of the Eye, what meant by it*, Vol. III. p. 357

F

- Factions. *See Heresies.*
- Faculties. *See Powers.*
- Faith, *a general Description of it*, Vol. I. p. 2, 3
- *what included in it*, Vol. II. p. 206, 240.
- *the various Senses of it in Scripture*, Vol. I. p. 5, 6
- *a moral Virtue*, Vol. I. p. 3. Vol. III. p. 57
- *that which overcometh the World*, Vol. VI. p. 162.
- *Men justified or saved by it*, Vol. IX. p. 59
- Faith, *the first Principle of all Religion*, Vol. IX. p. 75
- Faith, *founded in the Being and Attributes of God*, Vol. I. p. 10, 15
- Faith, *less strong than the Evidence of Sense or Demonstration*, Vol. VII. p. 220
- Faith and Righteousness *inseparably connected*, Vol. I. p. 11
- Faith, *the Christian Religion styled Faith by St Paul*, Vol. X. p. 109
- Faith, *the proper Objects of it*, Vol. I. p. 13
- Faith, *what meant by it in St Paul's Epistles*, Vol. I. p. 136
- Faith, *the Virtue of it*, Vol. V. p. 151
- Faith *not sufficient to Salvation without Holiness*, Vol. VII. p. 107
- Faith, *things contrary to Sense or Reason, not the Objects of Faith*, Vol. VII. p. 229.
- Fall of our first Parents, *the Occasion of it*, Vol. VI. p. 149.
- Falsehood and Vanity, *what meant by them in Scrip-*

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- Scripture, Vol. VIII. p. 71
- Fatalists, *the Weakness and Folly of them*, Vol. X. p. 296
- Fate, *what meant by it*, Vol. VI. p. 305
- Father, *the Nature of God & the Father*, Vol. VI. p. 112
- *the Honour due to him*, Vol. VI. p. 125.
- Father, *of a Family, his Duty*, Vol. III. p. 90
- Father, *God the Father of Mankind*, Vol. II. p. 50
- *calling Men Father, what meant by it*, Vol. II. p. 63
- Favour, *of the Gospel, anticipated before and under the Law*, Vol. V. p. 171
- Fear, *what meant by it*, Vol. IV. p. 37
- Fear of God, *what meant by it*, Vol. II. p. 122, 142
- *the Foundation of Religion*, Vol. II. p. 123, 126
- Fear of Punishment, *a just Ground of Obedience*, Vol. X. p. 324
- Fearful, *with respect to Religion, who are such*, Vol. VIII. p. 226
- Figures of Speech, *the true Use of them*, Vol. VIII. p. 245
- Flesh, *what meant by it*, Vol. I. p. 138. Vol. III. p. 255
- Flesh, *what meant by the Lust of it*, Vol. III. p. 255
- Flesh and Spirit, *what meant by those Words*, Vol. VIII. p. 28
- Flesh, *the Jewish Religion stiled Flesh by St Paul*, Vol. X. p. 114
- Foolishness, *the Doctrines of the Gospel falsely esteemed so*, Vol. IX. p. 34
- Foreknowledge, *See Pre-science.*
- Form of Godliness, *what*, Vol. I. p. 140
- Forms external, *the Deceitfulness of them*, Vol. VII. p. 376. Vol. VIII. p. 306
- Forgiveness, *true Repentance a Condition of it*, Vol. X. p. 34
- *the true Extent of that Duty*, Vol. X. p. 38
- *Motives towards it*, Vol. X. p. 38
- Forgiveness of Injuries, *the Gospel Condition of being forgiven us*, Vol. IV. p. 171

An Index of the principal Matters

Forgiveness of Sin, the
Freedom of it consistent
with the Satisfaction of
Christ, Vol. VIII. p.
326

— the original Ground
of it, is the essential
Goodness of God, Vol.
X. p. 29.

Form, that the Form of Re-
ligion may be changed,
Vol. X. p. 123

Frailties, humane Frailties,
a false Notion of them
betrays Men into Sin,
Vol. IX. p. 260

Fraud, the Malignity and
Consequence of deliberate
Fraud, Vol. X. p. 182

Freedom of Action, how
consistent with the Fore-
knowledge of God, Vol.
I. p. 262. Vol. II. p.
287

Fruit, the bringing forth
Fruit, the only mark of
Truth and Sincerity, Vol.
X. p. 89

Fruits of the Spirit, moral
Virtues, Vol. VI. p. 64

Fruits, Men are to be judg-
ed of by them, Vol. X.
p. 229

Fundamental Doctrines
what they are, Vol. IX.
p. 68. See Doctrines.

G

Garment, what meant
by that Expression
having on a wedding
Garment, Vol. VII. p. 33
Gentiles, their Temper dif-
ferent from that of the
Jews, Vol. V. p. 274

— their Objections a-
gainst the Gospel, Vol.
IX. p. 3

— they are entitled of the
Gospel-Covenant, Vol. X.
p. 258

Gift of the Holy Ghost. See
Holy Ghost.

Gifts of the Spirit. See
Spirit.

— great Gifts and Abili-
ties, the Promises of the
Gospel not annexed to them
Vol. VIII. p. 308

Glory of God, what meant
by it, Vol. II. p. 7. Vol.
VII p. 304

— how promoted by Men,
Vol. II. p. 27

Gnosticks, the ancient O-
pinion of them, Vol. IX.
p. 335

God, Arguments to prove
his Being, Vol. I. p. 15,
16. Vol. IX. p. 20

God, all his Actions con-
sistent with all his Attri-
butes,

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- butes, Vol. II. p. 213.
- God, *his Existence the Foundation of all Religion*, Vol. IX. p. 78
- God, *his primary Attributes*, Vol. I. p. 70
- God, *the Fountain of Divinity*, Vol. III. p. 360
- God, *his Unity*, Vol. I. p. 27. See *Unity*. *His Eternity*, Vol. I. p. 70. See *Eternity*. *His Spirituality*, Vol. I. p. 97. See *Spirituality*. *His Immutability*, Vol. I. p. 143. See *Immutability*. *His Omnipresence*, Vol. I. p. 169. See *Omnipresence*. *His Omnipotence*, Vol. I. p. 198. See *Omnipotence*. *His Omniscience*, Vol. I. p. 248. See *Omniscience*. *His Wisdom*, Vol. I. p. 274. See *Wisdom*. *His Goodness*, Vol. I. p. 322. See *Goodness*. *His Patience*, Vol. I. p. 348. See *Patience*. *His Justice*, Vol. I. p. 369. See *Justice*. *His Holiness*, Vol. II. p. 167. See *Holiness*.
- God, *how He is said to dispose all Things according to his own Will*, Vol. V. p. 17.
- God, *every Thing figuratively ascribed to him*, Vol. VI. p. 218. Vol. VII. p. 308, 312
- God, *not capable of being tempted*, Vol. VIII. p. 223
- How God is said to appear to Men, Vol. I. p. 105
- Coming unto God, *what meant by it*, Vol. IV. p. 212. Vol. I. p. 8
- God, *the Majesty of God, what meant by it*, Vol. V. p. 348
- God, *the right Hand of God, what meant by it*, Vol. V. p. 350
- Seeing God, *what meant by it*, Vol. VII. p. 109
- Gods, *Magistrates, styled Gods*, Vol. III. p. 360. Vol. V. p. 350
- Good, *what meant by it*, Vol. III. p. 193
- Good and Evil, *their difference manifest to all*, Vol. VII. p. 334
- *really different in Kind*, Vol. VIII. p. 118 Vol. X. p. 244
- Good Men, *the Absurdity of supposing such, not capable of falling into Sin*, Vol. IX. p. 336
- Goodness, *is the Nature of God*, Vol. VI. p. 400

An Index of the principal Matters

- Goodness of God, what it is*, Vol. I. p. 324
 — *the same as Goodness in Men*, *ibid.*
 — *how proved*, Vol. I. p. 328
 — *particular Instances of it*, Vol. I. p. 331
 — *how distinguished from Mercy*, Vol. I. p. 334
 — *the Extent of it*, Vol. I. p. 343
Gospel, they to whom it was never preached will not be judged by it, Vol. X. p. 86
Gospel, of Christ an universal Religion, Vol. V. p. 76
 — *the Design of it was to fulfil the Law*, Vol. V. p. 184
 — *and to separate the Good from the Bad*, Vol. VIII. p. 111.
 — *the intrinsic Excellency of it*, Vol. V. p. 251
 — *the Nature of it*, Vol. VI. p. 426
 — *the small Influence of it upon its Professours an Objection of Unbelievers*, Vol. IX. p. 160
Gospel, the Strength of its Evidense, Vol. V, p. 259
 — *its moral Precepts evident to all Men*, Vol. VIII. p. 206
 — *the Wisdom of God illustrated in it*, Vol. IX. p. 39
Gospel, the great and last Manifestation of the Wisdom of God, Vol. I. p. 298
Gospel, the End and Design of it, Vol. I. p. 302
Gospel, why the Effect of it so inconsiderable, Vol. II. p. 276
Gospel, its necessary Doctrines, plain to all, Vol. IV. p. 406
Gospel, the Conditions of it easy, Vol. V. p. 199
Gospel, that the Promises of it are all spiritual, is a Mark of its Truth, Vol. IX. p. 142
Gospels, what is principally contained in them, Vol. X. p. 98
Government, good Government the Foundation of Happiness, Vol. VI. p. 329.
Government, God's Government of the World, the Effect of his Goodness, Vol. I. p. 291
Governours, spiritual, their Duty, Vol. III. p. 344
 Grace,

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

Grace, *the various Senses of it*, Vol. II. p. 266, &c.

——— *what meant by it in St Paul's Epistles*, Vol. I. p. 136

——— *what meant by it in general*, Vol. II. p. 265, Vol. VII. p. 384

Grace and Nature, *very consistent*, Vol. II. p. 233

Grace, *the Particulars included in it*, Vol. II. p. 323

Grace of God, *consistent with the Liberty of Man*, Vol. II. p. 215; *ibid.* p. 287

Grace of God *does not operate on Men like Machines*, Vol. VI. p. 67

Grace, *the Christian Religion stiled Grace*, by St Paul, Vol. X. p. 112

Guide, *no need of an infallible one* Vol. III. p. 58, *ibid.* 120. Vol. IV. p. 361

H.

Habit, *of Righteousness necessary to Christian Perfection*, Vol. IX. p. 108

Habitual Sins, *the great Malignity of them*, Vol. X. p. 278

Hand, *sitting at God's right Hand, what meant by it*, Vol. II. p. 59

Happiness, *the Folly of seeking it by sinful Enjoyments*, Vol. IX. p. 348

Happiness, *that which all Men generally pursue*, Vol. VIII. p. 268, Vol. IX. p. 345

Happiness, *not to be enjoyed but by those who are actually holy*, Vol. VII. p. 108

——— *what it truly consists in*, Vol. IX. p. 356

Happiness of Heaven, *what it consists in*, Vol. V. p. 372

——— *not to be enjoyed by wicked Men*, Vol. VII. p. 110

Happiness, *comparatively greater in some Persons than in others*, Vol. VII. p. 216

Happiness of righteous Persons, *not to be taken from them*, Vol. X. p. 143

Happiness of the Righteous in a future State, *the general Description of it*, Vol. VII. p. 402, Vol. IX. p. 359

An Index of the principal Matters

- Hardning the Heart, *what meant by it*, Vol. IX. p. 239
 ——— *the extreme Danger of such a State*, Vol. IX. p. 246
- Hardning the Wicked, *what meant by it*, Vol. II. p. 301, Vol. IV. 389
- Heard; *the Doctrine of Christ must be heard and entertained*, Vol. X. p. 84
- Health, *the Foundation of all Enjoyment*, Vol. VI. p. 332
- Hearts, of Men known to God, Vol. I. p. 256
 ——— *hardning Mens hearts, what meant by it*, Vol. III. p. 54, Vol. IV. p. 385, Vol. IX. p. 60
- Heart, *an honest and good Heart, the principal thing required to qualify a Man for the Kingdom of God*, Vol. X. p. 77
- Heathens, *a Description of the State they were in before the Revelation of the Gospel*, Vol. VIII. p. 343
- Heaven, *what meant by it*, Vol. V. p. 346
- Heaven, *God's being in Heaven, what meant by it*, Vol. I. p. 181, Vol. II. p. 57
- Heaven, *the Conversation of Christians is there*, Vol. V. p. 366
- Heirs of God and of Christ, *who meant*, Vol. II. p. 78
- Hell; *what meant by it*, Vol. V. p. 329
- Heresy, *what meant by it in Scripture*, Vol. VIII. p. 31, Vol. X. p. 230
- Holiness of God, *Mens Obligation to imitate it*, Vol. II. p. 174
 ——— *wherein it consists*, Vol. II. p. 178
- Holiness, in Men, *what meant by it*, Vol. VI. p. 395
 ——— *attainable by Men*, Vol. VII. p. 99
 ——— *external and internal, what*, Vol. VII. p. 118
 ——— *indispensably necessary to Salvation*, Vol. IX. p. 293
- Holiness of Mind. See Purity
- Holy, *the Design of Religion is to make Men holy*, Vol. VII. p. 94
- Holy Ghost, *the Nature of him*, Vol. VI. p. 120
 ——— *the Honour due to him*, Vol. VI. p. 129

Holy

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- Holy Ghost, *what meant by it*, Vol. III. p. 200
- Holy Ghost, *its Gifts, and on whom conferred*, Vol. VI. p. 30
- Holy Ghost, *Sin against the Holy Ghost, what it consisted in*, Vol. VI. p. 14
- *melancholy pious Persons think themselves guilty of it*, Vol. X. p. 330
- Holy Ghost, *the Nature and Offices of it*, Vol. VI. p. 71
- Honour, *acquired by the Practice of Virtue*, Vol. VI, 335
- *no real Good nor our own*, Vol. IX. p. 352
- Honour, *what due to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, Vol. VI. p. 125
- Honour *due to God Almighty from all Creatures*, Vol. VIII. p. 349
- *of God diminished by the practice of Sin*, Vol. VIII. p. 353
- Hope, *what meant by it*, Vol. IV. p. 37, Vol. X. p. 29
- Humiliation of Christ, *what it consisted in*, Vol. VIII. p. 323
- Humility, *wherein it consists*, Vol. III. p. 210
- *the End of some Afflictions*, Vol. VI. p. 276
- Hypocrisy, *what meant by it*, Vol. III. p. 195
- *the several Degrees of it*, Vol. X. p. 222
- Hypocrite, *who meant by that Word*, Vol. X. p. 221
- Hypocrites, *most severely reprov'd by Christ*, Vol. VIII. p. 6
- I.
- I Dol, *Mediators, what* Vol. I. p. 57
- Idols, *what Idols are*, Vol. I. p. 83, Vol. IV. p. 236
- *whether lawful to eat Things sacrificed to them*, Vol. II. p. 34.
- *called Lies in Scripture*, Vol. VIII. p. 19, and p. 262
- Idolatry, *what it is*, Vol. IV. p. 236
- Idolatry *of the Church of Rome*, Vol. I. p. 58, Vol. IV. p. 232, and p. 236
- Idolatry, *the Nature and several Species of it*, Vol. I. p. 47, and p. 110, Vol. VIII. p. 19

An Index of the principal Matters

- Idolatry, *the Malignity of it*, Vol. III. p. 136
 ——— *the Absurdity of it*, Vol. VII. p. 332
 ——— *is the work of the Devil*, Vol. VIII. p. 19
 Idolatry, *the Original of it*, Vol. I. p. 50, Vol. II. p. 245
 Idolatry, *that Men are very prone to it*, Vol. I. p. 62, Vol. X. p. 274
 Idolatry, *the Punishment of it*, Vol. I. p. 65
 Jestings, *the Unbecomingness of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 247
 Jews, *expected our Saviour should be a temporal Prince*, Vol. V. p. 190
 ——— *the Temper of them different from that of the Gentiles*, Vol. V. p. 274
 ——— *their Prejudices against the Gospel*, Vol. VII. p. 114, Vol. IX. p. 2
 ——— *in what Sense they were the peculiar People of God*, Vol. X. p. 248
 Jewish Law. *See* Law.
 Jewish Religion, *usually styled Works*, Vol. II. p. 241, Vol. X. p. 109
 ——— *styled also Flesh by St Paul*, Vol. X. p. 114
 ——— *the In-*
sufficiency of it to make Men holy, Vol. X. p. 116
 Ignorance *causes Men to oppose Truth*, Vol. III. p. 356
 ——— *the great Ignorance of some Men in Matters of Religion*, Vol. IX. p. 423
 Image of Christ and of God, *what meant by it*, Vol. V. p. 405
 Images, *the Vanity of them*, Vol. I. p. 187, Vol. IV. p. 200
 ——— *the Worship of them dangerous*, Vol. II. p. 38
 Imitation of God, *the Obligations to it*, Vol. II. p. 169
 ——— *the Extent of this Duty*, Vol. II. p. 178
 ——— *what it consists in*, Vol. VI. p. 401
 Immenfity of God. *See* Omnipresence.
 Immorality, *severely re- proved by Christ*, Vol. VIII. p. 4
 Immortal. *See* Eternal.
 Immortality, *Man not necessarily indued with it in a State of Innocence*, Vol. II. p. 196, Vol. VIII. p. 300

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- Immutability of God, *with respect to his Essence, what*, Vol. I. p. 144; *With respect to his Perfections*, Vol. I. p. 147; *In his Decrees and Purposes*, Vol. I. p. 150; *In his Laws*, Vol. I. p. 152; *In his Covenants and Promises*, Vol. I. p. 153; *In his Threatnings*, Vol. I. p. 157
- Impartiality, *of God with regard to Persons*, Vol. I. p. 383
- Impossibility, *in Faith, Impositions*, Vol. I. p. 234
- Impostors. *See* Enthusiasts.
- Improvement, *the imaginary want of it, the Cause of great Uneasiness in religious melancholy Persons*, Vol. X. p. 320
- Imputative Righteousness of Christ, *what meant by it*, Vol. VII. p. 383
- Inattention. *See* Carelessness.
- Incarnation of Christ *a great Mystery*, Vol. I. p. 314
- Indisposition of Body, *often the Cause of Religious Melancholy*, Vol. X. p. 318
- Industry. *See* Diligence.
- Infallible, *the Absurdity of an infallible Church*, Vol. VIII. p. 101
- Infant Baptism. *See* Baptism.
- Inferences *not to be drawn from particular Expressions, but from the whole Discourse*, Vol. VII. p. 66
- Infidelity, *the great Cause of Mens Wickedness and Debauchery*, Vol. VIII. p. 132, Vol. IX. p. 252
- *a Description of the State of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 176
- Infirmity, *what are properly Sins of Infirmity*, Vol. IX. p. 267, Vol. X. p. 334
- Iniquity, *the Cause of its own Increase*, Vol. IX. p. 149
- *what meant by it*, Vol. X. p. 273
- Injuries, *the forgiving them, the Effect of Christian Love*, Vol. IV. p. 168
- Inquisition, *the Iniquity of it*, Vol. VI. p. 351
- Inspiration, *the true Notion of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 160
- *the Scriptures were written by Inspiration*, Vol. VIII. p. 156
- Institutions of Religion *what meant by them*, Vol. VII. p. 96
- Integrity, *a Perfection in Christians*, Vol. IX. p. 105

An Index of the principal Matters

- Intentions of Men, known to God, Vol. I. p. 256
- Intention, the Intention of the Agent necessary to Morality, Vol. X. p. 203, 214
- Intermediate State, the Happiness of it, Vol. VII. p. 397
- Inventions of Men, how often imposed instead of Religion, Vol. VII. p. 170
- Invisible Church, what meant by it, Vol. IV. p. 259
- Joy in the Holy Ghost, what meant by it, Vol. VII. p. 245
- Judgment, future, the Proof of it, Vol. VII. p. 334
- the Time when it shall be, Vol. VII. p. 337
- by whom to be performed, Vol. VII. p. 339
- the Persons called to it, Vol. VII. p. 341
- the Method in which it is to be performed, Vol. VII. p. 343
- Judgment, the Judgment of God, is according to right, Vol. VII. p. 45, Vol. VII. 158
- Judgment, God makes the same Judgment of Mens Actions that they do themselves, Vol. VIII. p. 208
- Judgments of Correction, and Condemnation, that there must be some proper Seasons for them, Vol. VII. p. 283
- Just, what meant by that Word in Scripture, Vol. IX. p. 117
- Justice, the particular Reward of it in the Gospel, Vol. IX. p. 134
- Justice, founded not in the Will of God but in the Reason of things, Vol. I. p. 374
- the Nature and Extent of it, Vol. IX. p. 120
- the Security of every Man's Property, Vol. IX. p. 130
- Justice of God, a Proof of it, Vol. II. p. 372
- what it consists in, Vol. I. p. 380, 394
- Inferences from it, Vol. I. p. 414
- Justice, every Man shall finally be rewarded according to the strictest Rules of it, Vol. IX. p. 196
- Justification, one Effect of Christ's Resurrection, Vol. V. p. 317
- Justified,

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

Justified, by Faith, Vol.
V. p. 170
—— *why no man can be
justified by the Law*, Vol.
V. p. 82

K

Kingdoms, *their Fates
depend on Providence*,
Vol. VI. p. 378

—— *their Blessings neces-
sarily temporal*, Vol. VI.
p. 379

Kingdom of God, *a mo-
ral Kingdom*, Vol. II.
p. 18

—— *what it principally
consists in*, Vol. II. p. 334

—— *what meant by it in
the New Testament*, Vol.
II. p. 339, Vol. VII. p.
236

—— *what meant by seeking
it*, Vol. II. p. 367

—— *the Reward of so do-
ing*, Vol. II. p. 401

—— *what compared to*,
Vol. IV. p. 211

—— *the Qualifications for
it*, Vol. X. p. 77

Kingdom of Heaven, *the
Gift of God*, Vol. II. p.
82

—— *Virtue a necessary
Qualification for entering
into it*, Vol. VII. p. 40

Knowledge, *that there is*

*in Man a natural Desire
of it*, Vol. VI. p. 136

—— *How to regulate it*,
Vol. VI. p. 138

Knowledge of Sin, *how
from the Law*, Vol. V.
p. 160. Vol. VIII. p. 189

Knowledge of things to
come, *the Desire of it un-
lawful*, Vol. VI. p. 150

L

Law, *the Nature of a
Law in general*, Vol.
V. p. 164

Law, *ceremonial how fulfil-
led by our Saviour*, Vol.
X. p. 45

Law, *the Jewish Law*,
why instituted, Vol. I.
p. 131

—— *not necessary to be re-
tained by Christians*, Vol.
I. p. 134

—— *how it is the same as
the original Law of God*,
Vol. V. p. 166

—— *Sinners not justified
by it*, Vol. V. p. 170

Laws of God, *immutable*,
Vol. I. p. 152

Lent, *the Original Institu-
tion of it*, Vol. VI. p. 186

Libertines, *the Weakness
and Folly of them*, Vol.
X. p. 294

E c 4

Liberty,

An Index of the principal Matters

- Liberty, the several Senses of the Word*, Vol. V. p. 305
Liberty, desirable by all, Vol. III. p. 7
 — *false Notions of it*, Vol. III. p. 8, 9
 — *of a rational Creature, what it consists in*, Vol. III. p. 12, 17
Liberty of God, what it consists in, Vol. III. p. 19
Liberty, what meant by Christian Liberty, Vol. III. p. 21
Licentious Men, trespass upon the Mercy of God, Vol. X. p. 299
Lie, the proper Notion of it, Vol. VIII. p. 241
Lie, believing a Lie, what meant by it, Vol. VIII. p. 99
Lie unto the Holy Ghost, what meant by it, Vol. X. p. 186
Life, the taking away the Life of a Man by chance no Crime, Vol. X. p. 201
 — *the Life of a Man may be taken away in self defence*, Vol. X. p. 203
Life and the Continuance of it, the Gift of God, Vol. VIII. 413. Vol. X. p. 28
Life, the Shortness and Van-ity of humane Life, Vol. VI. p. 232
Life, long Life promised to Obedience, Vol. II. p. 160
Life eternal, the free Gift of God, Vol. II. p. 197
 — *the fundamental Doctrine of the Christian Religion*, Vol. IX. p. 48
Life, Amendment or Newness of Life, the great End of the Gospel, Vol. IV. p. 59
Life of Christ, the strongest Motive to universal Obedience, Vol. IV. p. 128
Lives, the vicious Lives of Christians, a great Offence in hindring the Propagation of the Gospel, Vol. VI. p. 432
Long-suffering of God. See Patience.
Lord, what meant by the Lord, Vol. VIII. p. 86
Love, loving God the true Notion of it, Vol. I. p. 34, Vol. III. p. 363, Vol. X. p. 323
 — *the Duty of it*, Vol. II. p. 94
 — *wherein it consists*, Vol. II. p. 97
 — *loving God and practising Righteousness, the same*

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- same Thing, Vol. II. p. 106
 — the requisite Circumstances of such Love, Vol. II. p. 112
 — the Importance of this Duty, Vol. II. p. 117
 Love, the Love of Christ in being sent, consistent with the Love of God in sending Him, Vol. II. p. 217
 Love, the mutual Love of Christians one End of instituting the Sacrament, Vol. IV. p. 151
 Love, universal, the Perfection of a Christian, Vol. VI. p. 397. Vol. IX. p. 100
 Love of the World, what meant by it, Vol. III. p. 363
 Lust, what meant by it, Vol. VIII. p. 175. *ibid.* 219
 Lust, of the Eye, what meant by it, Vol. III. p. 357
 Lust, of the Flesh, what meant by it, Vol. III. p. 255
 Lusts of the Devil, what meant by them, Vol. VIII. p. 14
 Luxury, what it consists in, Vol. VII. p. 262
 Lying, what meant by it in Scripture, Vol. VIII. p. 18
 — the several Cases in which learned Men plead for it, Vol. VIII. p. 250

M

- Majesty, what meant by it, Vol. V. p. 347
 Magistrates, their Duty, Vol. III. p. 88, 345
 — Obedience due to them Vol. III. p. 335
 Man, the original State of him, Vol. VIII. p. 35
 Man, of Sin, what meant by it, Vol. III. p. 32, Vol. IV. p. 264
 Manicheans, the Absurdity of their Opinions, Vol. I. p. 231, 337
 Mankind, that Justice is due to them, Vol. IX. p. 128
 Mafs, the Vanity of the Sacrifice of it, Vol. VIII. p. 377
 Master, of a Family his Duty, Vol. III. p. 90
 — what due to him from Servants, Vol. III. p. 336
 — his Duty to his Servants, Vol. III. p. 344

Meats,

An Index of the principal Matters

Meats, *Distinction of Meats an indifferent Thing*, Vol.

VII. p. 240

Mediatour, *the Necessity of appointing one*, Vol. V. p. 357, Vol. X. p. 31

———— *the Folly of setting up false Mediatours*, Vol. V. p. 364

———— *no Ground or Foundation for setting up any other Mediatour but Jesus Christ*, Vol. VIII. p. 338

———— *the Design of appointing a Mediatour*, Vol. X. p. 32

Meditation upon heavenly things, Vol. V. p. 370

Meekness, *Opposers of Truth to be instructed in Meekness*, Vol. III. p. 161

Melancholy pious Persons, *ought not to be dejected*, Vol. VII. p. 357

———— *their needless Fears removed*, Vol. IX. 113

———— *how they ought to be treated*, Vol. IX. p. 431

———— *the Case of such*, Vol. X. p. 316

Mercy, *that Christians ought to show Mercy to the Poor*, Vol. IV. p.

174

Mercy of God, *how shewn in the Redemption of Mankind*, Vol. VIII. p. 379.

———— *not so great as to interfere with his Justice*, Vol. X. p. 301

Merit, *Men have no claim to it*, Vol. III. p. 229

———— *the Scripture Notion of it*, Vol. IV. p. 318, Vol. VIII. p. 303

Merit, *no Man can claim any for his good Works*, Vol. IX. p. 200

Merits of Christ, *relying upon them a great Corruption*, Vol. IV. p. 69, Vol. VIII. 316

Merits of Christ, *imputed to Sinners, the false Notion of it*, Vol. IV. p. 218, Vol. V. p. 362

Merits, *of the Saints, the Falseness of it*, Vol. I. p. 274

Merits of the Saints *an impious Notion of the Papists*, Vol. IV. p. 239

Messiah, *the Character of him*, Vol. V. p. 50

———— *His Condition in the World*, Vol. V. p. 57

———— *The End of his coming into the World*, Vol. V. p. 59

Mind, *a virtuous Disposition*

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- tion of it the best Help to understand true Religion,* Vol. III. p. 35
- *the Excellency of such a Disposition,* Vol. IV. p. 354
- *wherein it consists,* Vol. IV. p. 358
- Mind, of Man, the Image of God,* Vol. IX. p. 18
- Miracles, the external Proof of the Truth of the Christian Religion,* Vol. VIII. p. 143
- Miracles pretended by the Church of Rome,* Vol. VI. p. 177
- Miracles, a Popish Mark of the true Church,* Vol. IV. p. 263
- Miseries, arise not from Chance or Necessity,* Vol. VI. p. 238
- Mocking of God, Instances of it,* Vol. VII. p. 360
- Mocking, at Sin, the Folly of it,* Vol. III. p. 377
- Monkish Retirement, whence it arose,* Vol. II. p. 395
- Moral Duties, Rites and Ceremonies must give place to them,* Vol. X. p. 46
- Moral Duties, may all be reduced to the Love of God and of our Neighbour,* Vol. VII. p. 171
- *of eternal Obligation,* Vol. VII. p. 176
- Moral Good and Evil, what they consist in,* Vol. I. p. 372
- *essentially different,* Vol. II. p. 127, Vol. VII. p. 134
- *confirmed by the Authority of God,* Vol. VII. p. 148
- Moral Judgment, the Principle of Religion,* Vol. III. p. 105, Vol. IV. p. 351
- Moral Virtue, a living Sacrifice,* Vol. VII. p. 131
- Moral Virtues, the same as Grace,* Vol. II. p. 271, *ibid.* p. 302, Vol. VII. p. 246
- *the Gift of the Spirit,* Vol. VI. p. 62
- Morality, the practice of it necessary to a Christian,* Vol. III. p. 78
- *the great End of Religion,* Vol. VII. p. 247
- *the Sum and Essence of all Religion,* Vol. X. p. 118
- Mortality, Man naturally subject to it,* Vol. VIII. p. 414
- Mosaick Institution, the Law*

An Index of the principal Matters

- Law of God, Vol. I. p. 298*
Murder, the Heinousness of the Sin of it, Vol. X. p. 207
 ——— *what Crimes included under it, Vol. X. p. 215*
Mysteries, the Pride of seeking after them, Vol. III. p. 231
 ——— *what meant by them, Vol. IX. p. 61.*
- N
- N** *Ame, a good Name. See Reputation.*
Name, what it is to be baptized into the Name of any Person, Vol. IV. p. 81, Vol. VI. p. 50
Name, the Name of God, what meant by it, Vol. V. p. 88, and Vol. VIII. p. 69
National Sins not punished with national Punishments, Vol. X. p. 146
Nation. See Kingdoms.
Nature, the Law of it, the Law of God, Vol. I. p. 298
Natural Actions, in themselves innocent, Vol. X. p. 199
Natural Good and Evil, what they consist in, Vol. I. p. 372
Natural Events, God the Author of them, Vol. VI. p. 376
Natural Religion. See Morality.
Necessity, the Necessity of our Saviour's Sufferings, Vol. VIII. p. 400
Necessity, the Afflictions of Life arise not from Necessity, Vol. VI. p. 238
Neighbour, who meant by our Neighbour, Vol. X. p. 153
 ——— *Laws with respect to him, very universal, Vol. X. p. 213*
Neighbour, to be in Charity with him, a Qualification necessary for receiving the Communion, Vol. IV. p. 166
Notions, right Notions of God, of great Importance to Men, Vol. II. p. 187, p. 231
- O
- O** *Aths not always unlawful, Vol. VIII. p. 79*
Obedience, perfect Obedience required by the original

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- ginal Law of God, Vol V. p. 163
- Obedience due to God from all Creatures at all times, Vol. VIII. p. 349
- Obedience, the Universality of it necessary to Christian Perfection, Vol. IX. p. 106
- preferable to Prayer, Vol. IX. p. 437
- partial Obedience men are very liable to impose upon themselves with, Vol. X. p. 276
- Offence, what meant by it, Vol. VI. p. 423
- Offences in Religion will be, Vol. VI. p. 422
- what meant by being impossible not to come, Vol. VI. p. 435
- Offenders, the punishing of them the most effectual Vindication of the Laws of God, Vol. VIII. p. 358
- Omnipotence of God, Vol. I. p. 199
- the Perfection of it in the Creation, Vol. I. p. 207
- in the general Course of Providence, Vol. I. p. 208
- in particular Providences, Vol. I. p. 210
- in doing every thing without Difficulty, Vol. I. p. 212
- in doing every thing at once, Vol. I. p. 214
- does not extend to Contradictions, Vol. I. p. 216
- nor to things naturally Evil, Vol. I. p. 217
- nor to things morally Evil, Vol. I. p. 217
- Omnipresence of God, Vol. I. p. 170
- the Weakness of the Schoolmens Notion of it, Vol. I. p. 170
- not affected by the impurity of Things or Places, Vol. I. p. 180
- the Character of the true God in opposition to Idols, Vol. I. p. 187
- Omniscience of God, Vol. I. p. 251
- that God must be omniscient, Vol. I. p. 249
- the Object of Omniscience, Vol. I. p. 251
- the

An Index of the principal Matters

- the manner of it
 Vol. I. p. 266
 ——— the Certainty
 of it, Vol. I. p. 268
 ——— that it is the
 Object of our Admiration,
 Vol. I. p. 269
 Opinions erroneous, the ge-
 neral Cause of them, Vol.
 II. p. 298
 ——— how far hurtful,
 Vol. III. p. 139
 Opinions, that there will
 be Differences of Opinions
 amongst Christians, Vol.
 IV. p. 135
 Opinions, not to be imposed,
 Vol. VI. p. 146
 Opinions, Men ought not to
 value themselves upon the
 Rightness of their Opini-
 ons only, Vol. VII. p. 386
 Oracles, the ambiguity of
 them, Vol. VI. p. 151
- P
- P**arable, the Parable of
 the Sower explained,
 Vol. X. p. 73
 Parables, why our Saviour
 spake to the Multitude in
 Parables, Vol. X. p. 69
 Paradise, what meant by it,
 Vol. VIII. p. 300
 ——— the State of it,
 Vol. IX. p. 391
 Pardon, in all Pardon, the
 Condition of Repentance
 is supposed, Vol. X. p. 34
 Parents, their Duty to their
 Children, Vol. III. p.
 344
 Party, the Weakness of those
 who think to be saved by
 adhering to a Party of
 Men, Vol. VIII. p. 317
 Passover of the Jews, the
 End of its Institution, Vol.
 IV. p. 119
 Patience, part of the Cha-
 racter of a good Christian,
 Vol. X. p. 90
 Patience of God, a De-
 scription of it, Vol. I. p.
 348
 ——— Instances of it,
 Vol. I. p. 351
 ——— ill use made of it,
 Vol. I. p. 356
 ——— will have an End,
 Vol. I. p. 360
 Peace, what meant by it,
 Vol. VII. p. 243
 Peace, inward Peace con-
 tributes greatly to Mens
 Happiness, Vol. VI. p.
 336
 Perfect, how Men are said
 to be perfect as God is
 perfect, Vol. VI. p. 393
 Perfection, every Perfection
 amiable, Vol. II. p. 95
 Perfection, humane, what it
 con-

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- consists in*, Vol. VI. p. 395
what is so styled
in Scripture Sense, Vol.
 IX. p. 97
the Necessity of
continual striving towards
it, Vol. IX. p. 110
Perfections, of God immu-
table, Vol. I. p. 147
Perishing, what meant by
it, Vol. II. p. 199
Perjury, the Nature of it,
 Vol. VIII. p. 73
Persecution, in Matters of
Religion, the great Ab-
surdity and Inconsistence
of it, Vol. VII. p. 12
directly oppo-
site to Christianity, Vol.
 VII. p. 15
the Character
of the great Apostacy,
 Vol. VII. p. 21
religious Per-
sons greatly exposed to it,
 Vol. VIII. p. 332, Vol.
 X. p. 136
Perseverance, the Necessity
of good Mens Perseve-
rance in their Duty, Vol.
 IX. p. 218
the great Pro-
mises of the Gospel an-
nexed to Perseverance,
 Vol. IX. p. 395
what may pro-
perly be styled so, Vol.
- IX. p. 400
Pharaoh, how God hardened
his Heart, Vol. X. p. 330
Pharisees, the great Hypo-
crisy of them, Vol. X.
 p. 227, and p. 281
Philosophers, the Weakness
of the Arguments of the
several Sects of them, Vol.
 IX. p. 30
Pleasure, truly so called,
one of the first and na-
tural Principles planted in
Mankind, Vol. IX. p. 35
Pleasures, sensual, the im-
perfection of them, Vol.
 IX. p. 350
Polytheism, what it con-
sists in, Vol. VI. p. 98
Poor, ought to have Mercy
shown to them, Vol. IV.
 p. 174
Pope, the Original of the
Word, Vol. II. p. 65
his Claim to impose
Doctrines of Religion,
 Vol. VII. p. 50
Popery, Predictions of it,
 Vol. VI. p. 347
proper Means to
prevent the Growth of it,
 Vol. VI. p. 388
Popish Notion of the Church,
 Vol. IV. p. 205
Poverty, the Nature of it,
 Vol. VI. p. 263
Poverty of Spirit, what
meant

An Index of the principal Matters

- meant by it*, Vol. III. p. 264
Power, oppressive Power, the Character of it, Vol. VI. p. 342
Power. See Authority.
Power, the several Powers of God, how to be understood, Vol. I. p. 100
—— of God unlimited, Vol. I. p. 192
—— the right use of it, Vol. II. p. 9
Power, all Power originally from God, Vol. VI. p. 87
Powers, of Men, God the Author of them, Vol. II. p. 322
—— sufficient originally for the Knowledge of God, Vol. IX. p. 15
Prejudices, of the Jews and Gentiles against the Gospel, Vol. V. p. 281
Prayer, the Foundation of it, Vol. IX. p. 436
—— the Object of it, Vol. IX. p. 439
—— Foundation of it, Vol. IX. p. 440
—— the Knowledge of God no Objection to it, Vol. IX. p. 441
—— the Things proper to to be prayed for, Vol. IX. p. 445
—— the Circumstances and Qualifications necessary to it, Vol. IX. 450
—— things generally proceeding according to the course of Nature, no Objection to Prayer, Vol. IX. p. 453
Prayer, the Lord's Prayer an Explication of it, Vol. IX. p. 448
Prayers for the dead, the Absurdity of them, Vol. IV. p. 241
Preachers, of the Gospel, their Duty, Vol. III. p. 89
Preaching, the great Efficacy of preaching the Gospel, Vol. IX. p. 34
Predestinated, who meant by such in the ixth Chap. of the Romans, Vol. X. 329
Predestination, a groundless Doctrine, Vol. I. p. 151. Vol. VIII. p. 395
—— the consequences of it, Vol. III. p. 116
—— the true Scripture Notion of it, Vol. IX. p. 64
Prejudice, causes Men to oppose Truth, Vol. III. p. 159. Vol. VII. p. 201
Prescience, of God how consistent with the Liberty

in the Ten foregoing Volumes of Sermons.

- erty of Men, Vol. I. p. 259*
 — *the Folly of Mens claiming it, Vol. I. p. 272*
 — *consistent with the common Course of Things, Vol. VI. p. 374*
Pretences, false Pretences to Religion, what, Vol. VII. p. 42
Pride, the Absurdity of it, Vol. VI. p. 276
Pride, spiritual, what it consists in, Vol. III. p. 223
 — *the natural ill Consequences of it, Vol. III. p. 234*
 — *hateful to God, Vol. III. p. 239*
 — *the original Sin of the Devil, Vol. III. p. 242*
 — *the Pride of Life, what meant by it, Vol. III. p. 359*
Priest, Christ our High Priest, Vol. V. p. 353
Primitive Church, the Simplicity and Purity of it, Vol. X. p. 174
Primitive Christians, their false Notion of the Destruction of the Jewish Nation, Vol. X. p. 176
Princes, their Duty, Vol. III. p. 345
Probation. See Trial.
Profession, the mere Profession of Religion gives Men no Title to the Reward of it, Vol. VIII. p. 306, Vol. IX. p. 52, Vol. X. p. 256
Proofs, made use of by the Apostle different to the Jews from those to the Gentiles, Vol. X. p. 263
Promises, of God immutable, Vol. I. p. 153
 — *are all conditional, Vol. VI. p. 194*
Promises, of the Gospel almost wholly spiritual, Vol. IV. p. 106
Promises, made to the Gentiles, Vol. V. p. 98
Promises, temporal Promises expressly made to the Jews, Vol. IX. p. 371
Prophaneness, the Malignity of it, Vol. VIII. p. 53
Prophecy, not the Cause or Reason of the Things coming to pass, Vol. IV. p. 392
Prophecies, a Succession of them in the Old Testament centring in Christ, Vol. V. p. 14

An Index of the principal Matters

- Protestants, sometimes
guilty of Persecution, Vol.
VII. p. 23
- Providence, the Nature of
it, Vol. I. p. 177. Vol.
II. p. 381
- the unequal Dis-
tributions of it, Vol. I.
p. 405, Vol. VI. p. 252
- perpetually watches
over the righteous, Vol.
X. p. 140
- denied by some
Persons, Vol. X. p. 292
- Providence, the Calami-
ties and Afflictions of Life
arise from the wise Dispo-
sition of it, Vol. VI. p.
238
- extends itself to
the most minute things,
Vol. VI. p. 306
- has a peculiar
Influence on all great E-
vents, Vol. VI. p. 366
- this denied by
one Set of Philosophers,
Vol. VI. p. 367
- not inconsistent
with the Operations of
second Causes, Vol. VI.
p. 371
- Publick, Justice towards
the Publick, what it
consists in, Vol. IX. p.
128
- Punishment, how the Pu-
nishment of Sinners may
be laid upon an innocent
Person, Vol. VIII. p. 371
- Punishment, the Necessity
of it, Vol. I. p. 303,
340
- a Right which
the Law-giver may abate,
Vol. VIII. p. 372, and
Vol. X. p. 30
- future, propor-
tionate to Mens Demerits,
Vol. I. p. 340
- just and necessary,
Vol. I. p. 341
- the Certainty of
it though delayed, Vol. I.
p. 363
- the Severity of it,
Vol. I. p. 364
- impartially exe-
cuted, Vol. I. p. 397
- Punishment, God not obli-
ged in Justice to execute
it, Vol. I. p. 381
- God delights not
in executing it, Vol. VIII.
p. 360
- Punishment of Sinners in a
future State, the general
Description of it, Vol.
VII. p. 404, Vol. X. p.
303
- Purgatory, the Folly and
Vanity of the Popish No-
tion

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

tion of it, Vol. VII. p.

290

Purity, what meant by it, Vol. VI. p. 395, Vol.

IX. p. 99

Q

Questions of Curiosity, *always turned by our Saviour to the instructing Men in their Duty, Vol. VII. p. 59*

R

Reason, *the proper Exercise of a rational Creature, Vol. VIII. p. 200*

Reason, a sufficient Rule of Religion in Things to be judged of by Reason, Vol. VIII. p. 163. Vol. IX. p. 17

Reason and Revelation consistent with each other, Vol. V. p. 290

Reasonable, the Doctrines of Religion reasonable to be believed, Vol. V. p. 117

Reformed Religion, where it was before the times of

the Reformer, Vol. III.

p. 323

Reformation, the absolute Necessity of it in order to be made Partakers of the divine Mercy, Vol. VIII.

p. 379

Refuge, Places of Refuge, the Nature of them, Vol.

X. p. 208

Regenerate, a Description of a regenerate Person, Vol. VIII. p. 180

Regeneration, what meant by it in Scripture, Vol. IX. p. 326

Religion, what it is, and on what founded, Vol.

VI. p. 355. Vol. VII.

p. 12. Vol. VII. p. 96

Religion, the Nature of it, Vol. V. p. 117. Vol.

VI. p. 133

——— *depends entirely on Mens moral Qualities, Vol. IV. p. 376*

——— *the Practice of it tends to prolong Life, Vol. II. p. 153*

——— *that Form of it, the most perfect, which has the fewest Rites, Vol. VII. p. 250*

Religion, the truest Knowledge, Vol. VI. p. 134

An Index of the principal Matters

- *the Essence of it immutable*, Vol. X. p. 123
- Religion, *in Matters of Religion, every Man is to judge for himself*, Vol. IV. p. 361
- Religion, *the External of it not to be neglected*, Vol. VII. p. 249
- *that the Form of it may be changed*, Vol. X. p. 123
- Religion, *Instances in Scripture of Men put to Death upon account of Religion*, Vol. VII. p. 27
- Religion, *the Doctrines of it reasonable and sufficiently evidenced*, Vol. V. p. 117
- Religion, *does not always secure Men from the Consequence of their former Sins*, Vol. IX. p. 384
- Religion, *the true and ultimate Intent of it is to make Men holy*, Vol. VII. p. 94
- Religion, *does not alter Mens external Circumstances*, Vol. IX. p. 380
- Religion, *most agreeable to Nature*, Vol. VII. p. 154
- Religion, *scoffing, blaspheming or speaking reproachfully of it is profaning the Name of God*, Vol. VIII. p. 81
- Christian Religion, *the Nature of it*, Vol. VI. p. 35. See Christian.
- Religion, *there are sufficient Arguments to prove the Truth of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 138
- Religious, *who are truly such*, Vol. VIII. p. 225
- Religious, *the Wisdom of being religious*, Vol. II. p. 146
- Religious Persons, *lose nothing by Religion in this Life*, Vol. VII. p. 86
- Repent, *the great Folly of intending to repent*, Vol. IX. p. 296
- Repentance, *what meant by it*, Vol. VIII. p. 62, Vol. IX. p. 296, Vol. X. p. 34
- Repentance in God, *what meant by it*, Vol. I. p. 160
- Repentance, *the absolute Necessity of it*, Vol. I. p. 309
- — *the Nature of it*, Vol. III. p. 178, Vol. IX. p. 404
- — *the fruitless Design of delaying it*, Vol. IX.

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

IX. p. 284, Vol. X.
p. 308

Repentance, *a Death Bed,*
the Consequence of it,
Vol. III. p. 116, Vol.
IX. p. 203

————— *that God has*
not fixed any set time for
Repentance, Vol. IX. p.
232

Repentance, *a secondary*
Duty in Religion, Vol.
III. p. 173

Repentance, *caused by Af-*
fections, Vol. VI. p. 280

Repentance, *accepted in-*
stead of uninterrupted Ho-
liness, Vol. VII. p. 104

Repentance, *the Deceit of*
the imaginary Design of a
future Repentance, Vol.
VII. p. 387, Vol. X. p.
237

Repentance, *the necessary*
Consequence of Sin, Vol.
VIII. p. 59

————— *the great Dif-*
ficulty of it, Vol. IX. p.
300

Repentance, *a fundamental*
Doctrine of the Gospel,
Vol. IX. p. 79

Reprobate, *who meant by*
such in the xith Chapter
of the Romans, Vol. X.
p. 329

Reprobate, *who those are*
that are given over to a
reprobate Mind, Vol. IX.
p. 226

Reprobation, *absolute and*
unconditionate cannot be,
Vol. I. p. 327

Reputation, *very dear and*
valuable to Men, Vol.
X. p. 152

Resignation, *to the Will of*
God highly reasonable,
Vol. VI. p. 292

Resolutions, *some Sinners*
imagine that they shall
be accepted for their good
Resolutions, Vol. IX. p.
265, and 297

Rest, *what meant by it in*
St Paul's Epistles, Vol.
X. p. 61

Restitution for Wrongs *ab-*
solutely necessary, Vol.
IX. p. 124

Resurrection, *that there*
shall be a Resurrection of
the Body, Vol. V. p.
215

————— *the particular*
Manner of it, Vol. V.
p. 225

Resurrection of the Dead
and eternal Judgment,
fundamental Principles of
the Gospel, Vol. IX. p.
87

An Index of the principal Matters

- Resurrection of Christ, a Fact of the greatest Importance*, Vol. V. p. 296
 ——— *the Proofs of it*, Vol. V. p. 299
 ——— *the Manner of it*, Vol. V. p. 313
 ——— *the Effects of it*, Vol. V. p. 314
 ——— *an Assurance of our Resurrection*, Vol. V. p. 319
 ——— *the Sabbath Day a Commemoration of it*, Vol. X. p. 62
Retaining of Sin, what meant by it, Vol. X. p. 352
Revelation, the Usefulness and Necessity of it, Vol. VII. p. 328
 ——— *the right Knowledge of God was not attained without its Assistance*, Vol. IX. p. 29
Revelation and Reason consistent with each other, Vol. V. p. 290
Revelation, that it is agreeable to Reason to expect it, Vol. IX. p. 426
Revelation, Deniers of the Truth of it, how to be treated, Vol. IX. p. 426
Rewards of Vertue, not mercenary, Vol. III. p. 275
 ——— *an essential Part of Vertue*, Vol. IV. p. 313
Reward, promised in Scripture, what it is, Vol. IV. p. 312
Rewarded, every Man shall finally be rewarded according to his Works, Vol. VII. p. 350, Vol. IX. p. 186
Rewards and Punishments of a future State, the most effectual Motives to practise our Duty, Vol. VII. p. 393
 ——— *the Speediness and Certainty of them*, Vol. IX. p. 207
Riches, the true Use of them, Vol. VII. p. 258
 ——— *insufficient to procure true Happiness*, Vol. IX. p. 351
Right, is in the Nature of Things, and the Rule of Action in God, Vol. I. p. 205, 237
Right and free Gift comparable, Vol. VIII. p. 303
Rights, that Christians may defend their just Rights, Vol. IV. p. 173
Righteous, how scarcely saved, Vol. VII. p. 291
 Right-

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

Righteousness of God. See Justice.

Righteousness, the Practice of it, Mens truest Interest even in this Life, Vol. VI. p. 325

——— what meant by it, Vol. VII. p. 243

Righteousness of Christ imputed to Sinners, the false Notion of it, Vol. IV. p. 218, Vol. V. p. 210

Rites. See Ceremonies.

Rome, Church of Rome, its assumed Power, Vol. II. p. 66, 69

——— some of its gross Corruptions, Vol. IV. p. 199

——— pretends to be the only Catholick Church, Vol. IV. p. 260

——— its Absurdity in multiplying Forms and Ceremonies, Vol. VII. p. 254

——— how its Professours deceive themselves, Vol. VIII. p. 232

——— its vain Satisfaction for Sin, Vol. VIII. p. 376

——— how it makes void the Gospel, Vol. IX. p. 42

Rule of Faith, the Ground of the Papists denying the Scripture to be the only Rule of Faith, Vol. VIII. p. 168

S.

Sabellianism, what it consists in, Vol. VI. p. 98

Sabbath, the general Morality of it, Vol. X. p. 48, and 59

——— the Ends for which it was originally instituted, Vol. X. p. 49

——— the ritual Part of it is abolished by the Gospel, Vol. X. p. 62

——— the manner of observing it amongst Christians, Vol. X. p. 63

Sacrament, of the Lord's Supper, the general Nature, End, and Design of it, Vol. IV. p. 112.

——— to receive it in Remembrance of Christ, what meant by it, Vol. IV. p. 128

——— not a Sacrifice to be continually repeated as
F f 4 the

An Index of the principal Matters

- the Papists imagine*, Vol. IV. p. 134
 ——— *a confirming the Covenant with God*, Vol. IV. p. 145
 ——— *one great End of it is professing our Communion with each other*, Vol. IV. p. 160
 ——— *the Obligation which Christians are under to receive it*, Vol. IV. p. 179
 ——— *the Benefits of worthily receiving it*, Vol. IV. p. 185
 ——— *the Preparation necessary to it*, Vol. IV. p. 188
 ——— *the groundless Reasons of absenting from it*, Vol. IV. p. 196
 ——— *with-holding the Cup an Innovation of the Church of Rome*, Vol. IV. p. 202
Sacrifice, the Nature of an expiatory Sacrifice, Vol. VIII. p. 367
Sacrifice, Christ a Sacrifice for Sin, Vol. I. p. 304, Vol. IV. p. 136, Vol. V. p. 174
Sacrifice, the Death of Christ was truly and properly an expiatory Sacrifice, Vol. VIII. p. 366
Sacrifice, the Absurdity of making the Sacrament a Sacrifice, Vol. IV. p. 200
Sacrifice, an unbloody Sacrifice the Absurdity of it, Vol. VII. p. 131
Sacrifices, the Nature of them, Vol. VII. p. 128, Vol. VIII. p. 405
 ——— *insufficient to procure Pardon of Sin*, Vol. VIII. p. 374
Sacrifices, in what Sense Mens Bodies are said to be Sacrifices, Vol. VII. p. 121
Saints, the Idolatry of worshipping them, Vol. IV. p. 236, Vol. IX. p. 443
Saints, their Afflictions or good Works no way meritorious, Vol. VIII. p. 335
Salvation, what meant by it, Vol. II. p. 306, Vol. V. p. 253
Salvation, of Sinners, the Effect of God's Love, Vol. II. p. 209
 ——— *gradually revealed from the Beginning*, Vol. V. p. 17

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- originally from
 God, Vol. V. p. 34
 Salvation, *the Terms of it*
offered to all Men, Vol.
 IV. p. 334
 Salvation, *working it out,*
what meant by it, Vol.
 II. p. 311
 ——— the manner of
doing it, Vol. II. p. 315
 ——— the Qualifica-
tions necessary, Vol. IV.
 p. 305
 ——— Men brought to
it by preaching, Vol. IX.
 p. 35
 Salvation, *the Number of*
those that shall inherit it,
 Vol. IV. p. 275
 Sanctification, *one Effect of*
Christ's Resurrection,
 Vol. V. p. 318
 Satan, *how the Wickedness*
of Men is ascribed to him,
 Vol. IV. p. 382
 ——— *what meant by his*
filling the Heart, Vol.
 X. p. 187
 Satisfaction, *of Christ*,
wherein it consisted, Vol.
 I. p. 305, Vol. II. p.
 214, Vol. V. p. 333,
 Vol. VIII. p. 346, 366
 ——— consistent with the
free Pardon of Sin, Vol.
 II. p. 234, and Vol. VIII.
 p. 326

- by the Appoint-
ment of God, Vol. V.
 p. 32
 Saviour, *God and Christ*
both styled Saviour, Vol.
 IX. p. 54
 Saul, *the Weakness of his*
Excuse, Vol. VIII. p.
 230
 ——— the Crimes he was
guilty of in the matter of
the Amalekites, Vol.
 X. p. 263
 Scepticism, *the Folly of it*,
 Vol. X. p. 292
 Schism, *what meant by it*,
 Vol. IV. p. 93, 205
 ——— the Church of Rome
guilty of it, Vol. III. p.
 291, Vol. VI. p. 350
 ——— whence it arises, Vol.
 III. p. 320
 Scoffers at Religion, *how to*
be treated, Vol. IX. p.
 426
 Scriptures, *allegorising*
them, is often of dange-
rous Consequence, Vol.
 VII. p. 190
 Scriptures, *a sufficient Rule*
of Faith and Practice,
 Vol. VIII. p. 162
 Scriptures, *the infallible*
Guide to Truth, Vol.
 VII. p. 211

Scriptures

An Index of the principal Matters

- Scriptures, *false Interpretations of single Texts, often very delusive*, Vol. VII. p. 383
- *the great Difficulty of applying them to different Sorts of Persons*, Vol. IX. p. 411
- *how to interpret them right*, Vol. X. p. 98
- Seasons of Humiliation, *the Design of them*, Vol. X. p. 337
- Seed, *what meant by it in Scripture*, Vol. IX. p. 332
- Self-Murder, *the Heinousness of the Sin of it*, Vol. X. p. 210
- Separate State. See Intermediate State.
- Servants, *their Duty to their Masters*, Vol. III. p. 336.
- Severity, *unreasonable Severity contrary to Morality*, Vol. X. p. 58
- Severity, *of God, consistent with his Goodness*, Vol. II. p. 228, Vol. V. p. 187
- Signs, *how abused by the Jews*, Vol. V. p. 123
- Shilo, *what meant by it*, Vol. V. p. 66.
- Sin, *the formal Nature and Essence of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 220, Vol. X. p. 332
- Sin, *a Disease of the Soul*, Vol. III. p. 170
- *what meant by it in the New Testament*, Vol. IX. p. 329
- Sin, *God not the Author of it*, Vol. VII. p. 313, Vol. VIII. p. 221
- Sin, *how Christ has obtained the Victory over it for us*, Vol. V. p. 173
- *its Strength from the Law*, Vol. V. p. 160
- *how Christ has delivered us from the Dominion of it*, Vol. V. p. 192
- Sin, *the Knowledge of it is by the Law*, Vol. VIII. p. 189
- Sin, *the folly of mocking at it*, Vol. III. p. 337
- *the Deceitfulness of it*, Vol. IX. p. 244
- *the great Folly and Danger of continuing in it*, Vol. IX. p. 289
- Sin, *and Punishment, proportional to each other*, Vol. VII. p. 319, and *ibid.* p. 325
- Sin,

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

- Sin, wherein the Effence of it consists, Vol. X. p. 201
- Sin, the Power and Efficacy of it is from the Law, Vol. V. p. 160
- Sin, presumptuous Sin, the Nature of it, Vol. IX. p. 267
- Sin, our Saviour underwent the Punishment of it, Vol. V. p. 203
- Men freed from it thereby, Vol. V. p. 205.
- Sin, who meant by Persons that cannot sin, Vol. IX. p. 334
- Sincerity, the great Security of it, Vol. VIII. p. 282
- the Measure by which Men's Actions shall be judged, Vol. IX. p. 202
- Men are accepted according to their Sincerity, Vol. X. p. 92
- Sincerity, necessary to find out Truth, Vol. VII. p. 205
- Sinners incorrigible, a Description of them, Vol. V. p. 122.
- their weak Pleas for themselves, Vol. VIII. p. 218
- the Necessity of destroying them, Vol. VIII. p. 384
- Sinners, Men become so by small Degrees, Vol. IX. p. 242
- Sinners, God delights not in punishing them, Vol. VIII. p. 360
- that it is in God to leave incorrigible Sinners to reap the Fruit of their Sins, Vol. IX. p. 224
- Sinners, the Salvation by Christ gradually Revealed from the beginning of the World, Vol. V. p. 22
- Sinners, the Difficulty of recovering them out of their unhappy State, Vol. VIII. p. 419
- the Means by which it may be effected, Vol. VIII. p. 421
- Sins, Men flatter themselves by imagining that their Sins are small, Vol. IX. p. 261, and p. 274
- or that they are but few, *ibid.* p. 265
- Sins of Infirmary, what are such, Vol. IX. p. 267, and p. 270
- Socinians, their Notions of Christ, Vol. VI. p. 92

An Index of the principal Matters

- Socinianism, *what it consists in*, Vol. VI. p. 99
- Solicitude, *too great Solicitude about worldly Things forbidden to Christians*, Vol. X. p. 16.
- Son of God, *the Nature of of him*, Vol. VI. p. 113
- *the Honour due to him*, Vol. VI. p. 126
- Son of God, *what meant by it*, Vol. V. p. 29.
- the several Senses of that Phrase*, Vol. V. p. 51
- Son of Man, *what meant by it*, Vol. V. p. 29
- Sons, *of any Thing or Person, the Scripture-Meaning of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 12
- Sorceries, *Religious Sorceries, what meant by them*, Vol. VI. p. 352, Vol. IX. p. 178.
- Soul, *the Loss of it not to be compensated by gaining the whole World*, Vol. VII. p. 76
- Soul, *its Immortality proved from Reason*, Vol. IX. p. 189
- Speech, *the true Intent and use of it*, Vol. VIII. p. 243
- *licentious Speech, the Sin of it*, Vol. X. p. 166
- Spirit, *that God is a Spirit*, Vol. I. p. 97
- *what meant by it*, Vol. I. p. 138
- *who are said to have the Spirit*, Vol. II. p. 87
- Spirit of God, *assists good Men secretly*, Vol. III. p. 51
- *withdrawn from wicked Men*, Vol. III. p. 52
- *the Fruits of it, what*, Vol. III. p. 204
- Spirit, *the Witness of it to our Saviour*, Vol. VI. p. 173
- Spirit, *the several Gifts of it*, Vol. VI. p. 59, &c
- Spirit, *how to know if any Man has the Spirit*, Vol. VI. p. 43
- Spirit and Flesh, *what meant by them*, Vol. VIII. p. 28.
- Spirit, *the Christian Religion styled Spirit by St. Paul*, Vol. X. p. 114
- Spirits, *wicked Spirits, why they tempt Men to Sin*, Vol. VI. p. 206.
- State, *of Mankind before the Revelation of the Gospel*, Vol. VIII. p. 343
- State, *a future State, proved from Reason*, Vol. IX. p. 188

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

Subjection, to Superiours, the general Extent of it, Vol. III. p. 337.

Suffer, what meant by Christ's being to suffer, Vol. VIII. p. 322

Sufferings, of good Men, what they consist in, Vol. VII. p. 81

Sufferings, of Christ, the great Expiation for Sin, Vol. VIII. p. 323, and

P. 345
——— the Necessity of his Sufferings, Vol. VIII. p. 400

Sufferings, the best Men often subject to the greatest of them, Vol. VII. p. 281

——— particularly the Disciples of Christ, Vol. VIII. p. 327

Supererogation, a fond pretence in the Romith-Church, Vol. III. p. 230

——— Christian Perfection does not consist in it, Vol. IX. p. 112

Superstition, Instances of it, Vol. II. p. 133

Superstition, the Effects of it, Vol. III. p. 110

Superstitious Fears, the Effect of them, Vol. II. p. 131

Surprise, Sins of Surprise are to be esteemed Sins of Infirmary, Vol. IX. p. 271

Swearing, rashly and in common Conversation, the Iniquity of it, Vol. VIII. p. 74

T.

Teachers, Spiritual, what due to them, Vol. III. p. 335

Temple, the Glory of the second Temple greater than that of the first, Vol. V. p. 68

Tempted, why Christ submitted himself to be tempted, Vol. VI. p. 186

Tempted, the several Ways in which Men are tempted, Vol. VI. p. 221

Temptation, how God is said to lead Men into it, Vol. VI. p. 218.

Temptations, of Christ, why said to be at one Time only, Vol. VI. p. 180.

——— why it lasted forty Days, Vol. VI. p. 182

Temptations, the Nature and Foundation of them, Vol. VIII. p. 220

——— how

An Index of the principal Matters

- how Men become
capable of them, Vol.
VIII. p. 224
- the greatness of
them no Excuse to wicked
Men, Vol. IX. p. 263,
and 276
- Temptations, no Persons
exempt from them, Vol.
VI. p. 211, Vol. VIII.
p. 38**
- Tryals of Men's
Virtue, Vol. VI. p. 214
Vol. VIII. p. 126
- Temptations, the greater
the Temptation, the more
valuable is Men's Faith,
Vol. VII. p. 228**
- Tempter, why he would at
all assault Christ, Vol.
IV. p. 188**
- how said to de-
part from him only for a
Season, Vol. VI. p. 196
- Tempting, of God, what
meant by it, Vol. X. p.
188**
- Testimony, of Christ's Doc-
trine, Vol. VI. p. 164**
- Texts, the picking out sin-
gle Texts of Scripture, the
Occasion of false Inter-
pretations of it, Vol. X.
p. 96**
- obscure Texts
ought to be explained by
the plainer ones, Vol. X.
p. 328
- Thoughts of Men known to
God, Vol. I. p. 256**
- wicked and blas-
phemous Thoughts, the
Cause of great uneasiness
to melancholy pious Per-
sons, Vol. X. p. 331
- Threatnings, of God, im-
mutable, Vol. I. p. 157**
- are all condition-
al, Vol. VI. p. 194
- Time, the fullness of Time
in which Christ appeared,
Vol. V. p. 66**
- Reasons for his Ap-
pearance at that Time,
Vol. V. p. 72
- Tongues, the Gift of
Tongues, what, Vol. V.
p. 264**
- necessary to spread
the Gospel, Vol. VI. p. 2.
- Tradition, the Popish No-
tion of its being a Rule of
Faith, Vol. VIII. p. 167**
- Transubstantiation, the
Absurdity of it, Vol. I.
p. 235, Vol. II. p. 256,
Vol. III. p. 340, Vol.
VII. p. 230**
- Tree, of Life, what meant
by it, Vol. VIII. p. 299**
- Trinity, the true Notion of
it, Vol. VI. p. 100**
- the

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

——— *the respective Offices of the Three Persons in it,* Vol. VI. p. 106, and p. 121

——— *the speculative Nature of the Persons,* Vol. VI. p. 111

Trouble, *of Mind in pious Persons, what it is owing to,* Vol. VI. p. 338

Truth, *what meant by it in the New Testament,* Vol. III. p. 3, Vol. VIII. p. 253

——— *the Reality and Importance of it,* Vol. III. p. 150

——— *the Obligations to speak it,* Vol. VIII. p. 254

Truth, *and Errour, essentially different,* Vol. III. p. 146

Truth, *difficult to be come at,* Vol. VII. p. 191

Tryal, *all rational Beings must at first be in a State of Tryal,* Vol. VIII. p. 9

Tryals, *proper to separate the good from the bad,* Vol. VIII. p. 121

Tyranny, *Religious Tyranny, what,* Vol. VI. p. 347

U.

V Ertue, *Vertue and Vice essentially different,* Vol. II. p. 128

——— *Moral Vertue the end of Religion,* Vol. II. p. 185

——— *of the same kind in God as in Men,* Vol. II. p. 186

——— *indispensably necessary to Salvation,* Vol. IX. p. 293

——— *the natural Tendency of it,* Vol. X. p. 132
Vertue, *the Practice of it, the End of all Religion,* Vol. III. p. 133

——— *in general, a Gain and not a Loss to Men,* Vol. X. p. 145

Vertue, *not mercenary,* Vol. VI. p. 321, Vol. VII. p. 408

Vertue *naturally tends to promote Mens Happiness,* Vol. IX. p. 364

Vertue, *Health the Consequence of the Practice of it,* Vol. VI. p. 332

——— *the external Advantages of Life flow from it,* Vol. VI. p. 333

——— *most*

An Index of the principal Matters

- *most agreeable to*
Nature, Vol. VII. p. 154
Vice, most contrary to Na-
ture, Vol. VII. p. 154
Vices, almost all Calamities
proceed from Vices, Vol.
 IX. p. 364
Vicious Inclinations, a great
Hindrance to the under-
standing of true Religion,
 Vol. III. p. 40
Victory spiritual in what
it consists, Vol. IX. p. 394
Vineyard, the Parable of
it explained, Vol. I. p. 412
Virgin Mary, Worship to
Her forbid by our Savi-
our, Vol. VIII. p. 313
Visible Church of Christ,
what it means, Vol. IV.
 p. 260
Visibility, a Popish Mark
of the true Church, Vol.
 IV. p. 261
Unbelief, the Uncomfort-
ableness of it, Vol. I. p. 22
 ———— *what meant by it*,
 Vol. IV. p. 44, Vol.
 VI. p. 7, Vol. VIII.
 p. 94
Unbelievers, who properly
meant by them, Vol. V.
 p. 2.
Uncharitableness, what it
consists in, Vol. III. p.
 287.
- *the incredible*
Mischiefs of it, Vol. III.
 p. 308
Understand, what meant by
it in Scripture, Vol. III.
 p. 31
Universal Church, who
are the true Members of
it, Vol. X. p. 245
Universality, a Popish
Mark of the true Church,
 Vol. IV. p. 262
Unity of God, Vol. I.
 p. 27, &c.
Unity of Christians, where-
in it consists, Vol. IV. p.
 268
Unity of Christians, two
Ways only of effecting it,
 Vol. III. p. 319
 ———— *the End of in-*
stituting the Sacrament,
is to promote it, Vol. IV.
 p. 153
Unregenerate, a Descrip-
tion of an unregenerate
Christian, Vol. VIII.
 p. 184
Vow, what meant by it in
the Old Testament,
 Vol. X. p. 197
Vows, Christians under no
Obligation to make any,
 Vol. X. p. 194
Vows, careless and inconfi-
derate Ones are Prophan-
nations

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

*nations of the Name of
God, Vol. VIII. p. 83*

*Uprightness, what meant
by it in Scripture, Vol.
VIII. p. 270. See Since-
rity.*

*Upright Man, the Grounds
He acts upon, Vol. VIII.
p. 272*

W.

W*alking, what meant
by it in Scripture,
Vol. VIII. p. 269*

*Walking uprightly and sure-
ly, what meant by so
doing, Vol. VIII. p.
270*

*Watching, the Necessity of
good Mens watching, Vol.
IX, p. 220*

*Water, the Testimony of it
to our Saviour, Vol. VI.
p. 168*

*Wicked, that the World
will be wicked, Vol. IX.
p. 146*

*Wicked Men, their unrea-
sonable Expectations ought
not to be gratified, Vol.
V. p. 143*

*—— Losers by their
Wickedness even in this*

*World, Vol. VII. p.
87*

*—— how said to be made
for the Glory of God,
Vol. VII. p. 305*

*—— the Character of
them, Vol. VIII. p. 91*

*Wickedness, causes Men
to oppose the Truth, Vol.
III. p. 160*

*Will of God, what meant
by it, Vol. VII. p.
384*

*Will, the whole Will of God
discovered by the Gospel,
Vol. V. p. 194*

*Wisdom, in general, what,
Vol. I. p. 227, 301*

*Wisdom of God, proved
to be necessarily in Him,
Vol. I. p. 277*

*—— manifest in his
Works, Vol. I. p. 282*

*—— in his Govern-
ment of the World, Vol.
I. p. 291*

*—— in the Law of
Nature, Vol. I. p.
298*

*—— in the Mosaick
Institution, Vol. I. p.
298*

*—— more so in the
Gospel, Vol. I. p. 300*

*Wisdom, what it consists
in, Vol. IX. p. 39*

G g

Wif-

An Index of the principal Matters

- Wisdom, the Wisdom of being religious, Vol. II. p. 146*
Wisdom of the Heathen, the Insufficiency of it with respect to Religion, Vol. IX. p. 10
Wisdom, the true Wisdom of Man, wherein it consists, Vol. IX. p. 15
Witch of Endor probably a Cheat, Vol. X. p. 287
Witchcraft, what meant by it in Scripture, Vol. VIII. p. 17, Vol. X. p. 272
Witness, false Witness, the Nature and Extent of it, Vol. X. p. 156
——— Reasons and Motives to influence Mens Practice with regard to it, Vol. X. p. 163
Word of God, what meant by it, Vol. VI. p. 114
Words, good Men have regard to their Words, Vol. VIII. p. 66
Works of God, manifest his Wisdom, Vol. I. p. 283
——— may be known unto all Men, Vol. IX. p. 17
Works, good, the Merit of them, Vol. II. p. 215
Works, every Man shall be finally rewarded according to his Works, Vol. VII. p. 350
Works of the Flesh, what meant by them, Vol. VIII. p. 39, 233
Works, the Jewish Religion stiled Works by St. Paul, Vol. II. p. 241, Vol. X. p. 109
World, the Order and Beauty of it, a Proof of the Being of God, Vol. I. p. 16
——— what meant by it, when we are commanded not to love it, Vol. III. p. 354
——— the Love of it, the great Cause of Mens Infidelity, Vol. VIII. p. 148
Worldly Mindedness, the great Danger of it, Vol. VII. p. 267
Worship of God, what implied in it, Vol. I. p. 31, &c. Vol. VIII. p. 69
——— external, the Obligation to it, Vol. I. p. 37
——— private to be performed, Vol. I. p. 189

——— must

in the foregoing Ten Volumes of Sermons.

——— *must be accompanied
with Obedience, Vol. I.*

p. 42

——— *how to worship Him
in Spirit, Vol. I. p. 109*

——— *publick, to be per-
formed, Vol. II. p. 27*

——— *a reasonable Ser-
vice, Vol. IX. p. 435*

IV. p. 402

——— *true Zeal how distin-
guished from that which
is false, Vol. IV. p. 403,
&c*

*Zeal, for any Party or O-
pinion, the Weakness of
grounding the Hopes of
Salvation upon it, Vol.*

VIII. p. 317

Z.


Z *eal, true Zeal where-
in it consists, Vol.*

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Date Due

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